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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

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I

PREFACE

THIS book has been written with the conviction that there is a need for a short elementary textbook on the psychology of religion that will make available to college students and the general reader the most interesting and valuable results of the work of scholars in this field of inquiry. An attempt has been made throughout to keep the discussion in close contact with the religious consciousness of the ordinary person. This method, it is felt, should enable the student to appropriate without difficulty the material presented and to form his own opinion on the topics considered. It is believed that this procedure will not only serve to give him a true understanding of the psychology of religion but will be a constructive influence in his religious thought.

No claim of originality need be made for a book written with this purpose. Attention of psychologists, however, may properly be called to two features: First, in the chapters dealing with cult practices, not only are the psychological principles underlying cult practices elucidated, but the function of these practices in promoting the religious development of the individual is stressed. Recognition of this function is necessary for an understanding of cult practices, and it should lead to a greater appreciation of the value of religious activities. Secondly, the phenomena of religious experience are given a cosmic setting. It is felt that religious phenomena cannot, at

least by beginners, be satisfactorily considered by themselves alone. The attempt to do so leads in many cases to confusion between a description of the phenomena and an explanation, with the consequent loss of real understanding and appreciation. Even psychologists working in this field have been guilty at times of making this blunder. How must the nature of reality be conceived in order to make religious phenomena intelligible is therefore a question which has been kept before the reader.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep indebtedness to Professor W. K. Wright of Dartmouth College, Professors Craig S. Thoms, E. M. Stevens, and A. L. Keith of the University of South Dakota, and the Reverend Dr. P. A. Sharpe for the aid they have so generously given me. A large part of whatever merit this book possesses is due to their help. In writing a text of this kind I feel that it is impossible to point out the sources of all the ideas contained. I have, however, attempted to indicate my chief sources, and I believe that those given are sufficient to mark out a fruitful pathway for students who wish to continue the study.

C. C. J.

University of South Dakota
January 15, 1926

CONTENTS

PART I

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION 1

Value of the Study—Objections to the Study—Erroneous Conceptions of the Nature of Religion—Religion and Mystery—Methods of Studying the Psychology of Religion (1) The Pathological Method, (2) The Comparative Method, (3) The Genetic Method—The Need of a Metaphysical Background for the Study of Personality—Psychology and Theology—Summary.

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES 24

Instincts—Development of the Sentiments—Conflicts—The Unconscious—Multiple Personality—The Projective Mechanism—Conscience—Suggestibility—Determinants of the Degree of Suggestibility (1) Subjective Factors, (2) Objective Factors—Value of Suggestibility—Summary.

CHAPTER III

DEFINITION OF RELIGION 49

Purpose of a Definition—Universal Characteristics of Religion—Objective Characteristics of Religion—Subjective Characteristics of Religion—Religion

from the Sociological Point of View—Summary and Definition—Religion and Magic—Summary—Religion and Ethical Culture—Religion and Belief in Gods or Spirits—Religion and Belief in Immortality—Religion and Morality—Religion and Social Service—The Non-Religious—Summary.

PART II

DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION 71

Development of Religion in the Individual and in Society—The Origins of Religion—Religion an Outgrowth of Uncertainty—Religion a Reaction to Natural Forces—Religion a Product of Metaphysical Interests—Psychological Phenomena as a Source of Religion—Summary—Origin No Test of Validity in Religion—The Course of Development Taken by Religion as Illustrated in (1) Greek Religious Conceptions, (2) Hebrew Conceptions in Religion, (3) Christian Religious Conceptions—Summary.

CHAPTER V

BELIEF IN GOD 95

Belief in God's Existence—Roads to Belief in God (1) Suggestion, (2) Emotional and Affective Experiences, (3) Ethical Reflection, (4) Metaphysical Arguments, (5) The Pragmatic Path—Roads to Disbelief in God (1) Too Rigid Conceptions, (2) God as Unknowable, (3) Emotional and Affective Experiences, (4) Contra-Suggestion, (5) Authority—Ways that Belief in God Proves Itself of Value (1) As a Wholesome Restraining Force, (2)

As an Urge to Righteousness, (3) As an Aid to Objectivity in Moral Judgments, (4) As an Aid to Meditation, (5) As a Source of Sympathy, (6) As a Source of Strength, (7) As a Means of Appreciation of Beauty—Idea of a Personal versus an Impersonal God—Summary.

CHAPTER VI

BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY 122

Origin of Belief in Immortality—Conceptions of the Future Life—Reasons for the Persistence of the Belief (1) Social Suggestion, (2) Ethical Reflections, (3) Psychical Research, (4) Metaphysical Arguments—Obstacles to Belief in Immortality—Proving Immortality—Importance of Belief in Immortality for Religious Life—Summary.

PART III

DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN THE INDIVIDUAL

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT BY GRADUAL GROWTH . . 147

Introductory—Moralization of the Individual—The Religious Development of the Child—Religious Development of the Adolescent—Characteristics of Adolescence—Difficulties in the Way of Aiding the Religious Development of the Adolescent (1) Disposition to Doubt, (2) The Tendency to be Dogmatic, (3) The Way Youth Sometimes Lets its Conscientiousness Get Out of Bounds—The Religious Development of the Adult—Summary.

CHAPTER VIII

CONVERSION 187

Introductory—Conversion as an Awakening—Preconversion States—Conversion States—Explanation of Conversion—Conditions Favorable to Conversion—Duration of the Effects of Conversion—Gradual Growth and Conversion Compared—Summary.

CHAPTER IX

CULT PRACTICES 211

Introductory—Origin of Cult Practices (1) Outlets for the Emotional Life, (2) Outlets for the Aesthetic Interests, (3) Deliberately Devised Ways and Means of Stimulating the Religious Life—Group Worship—Reverence for Sacred Symbols—Music—Chanting and Repeating a Creed—The Eucharist—The Rite of Baptism—Offerings—Group Worship and Private Meditation Compared.

CHAPTER X

PREACHING 228

Qualifications of the Preacher—The Preacher and His Task (1) Instruction Concerning Spiritual Realities, (2) Introducing Law and Order among Beliefs and Dealing with Doubts, (3) Spurring His Hearers to Greater Loyalty and Devotion to Their Highest Ideals—Summary.

CHAPTER XI

ASCETICISM 250

Definition—Present Unpopularity of Asceticism—Description of Ascetic Practices—Sources and Motives of Asceticism (1) Sources that are Predomin-

antly Instinctive, (2) Sources that are Predominantly Conceptual—Asceticism and Human Nature —Value of Asceticism—Summary.

CHAPTER XII

PRAYER 285

Definition and Classification—Promptings to Prayer—Growth of Discrimination regarding the Objects of Prayer—Answers to Prayers—The Efficacy of Prayer—On What does the Efficacy of Prayer Depend—An Interpretation of Prayer—Summary.

CHAPTER XIII

MYSTICISM 315

Definition—Description and Classification of Mysticism—Favorable Conditions for Producing the Mystic Experience—Methods of Producing the Mystic Experience—Stigmatization—Demon Possession—Value of Mysticism—Trustworthiness of the Mystic's Findings.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION 341

Meaning or Purpose of Religion—Truth of Religion—Future of Religion.

INDEX 349

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Value of Studying the Psychology of Religion. The study of the psychology of religion should appeal to all those who are interested in the problems of human behavior and of personality, because in religious activities the great values and purposes of man's inner nature are revealed in action. That study should likewise appeal to all those who are interested in the spiritual welfare of man because the knowledge so obtained will be found helpful in stimulating the development of man's spiritual nature. It should appeal also to those who are interested in investigating the nature of our universe, for the values and aspirations which underlie religious behavior constitute an integral part of reality and must be taken into consideration in formulating any ultimate view of it.

Objections to the Study. In spite of the benefits which one may thus reasonably expect to derive from a study of the psychology of religion, there are some who fear that it will prove deterimental to religious development. Religion and science, they hold, are two radically different ways of looking at reality, and as a consequence, they fear no good can come to religion from making it a subject of scientific study. While fear is undoubtedly based on misunderstanding, yet those who entertain it

can point to some justification for it in the fact that the religious life of the student has in some cases been undermined by such a study. Naturally they tend to ignore the fact that the religious life of countless others has been enriched and deepened by this same study, rightly pursued. We feel that an explanation of the reasons why the study of the psychology of religion in some instances proves destructive and in others constructive, will do much to remove the fear and suspicion, entertained in some quarters, with reference to its pursuit. While not a complete list of these adverse factors, it can safely be said that the following are very important: (1) Erroneous conceptions of the nature of religion; (2) Improper use of the methods appropriate to the study; and (3) An inadequate metaphysical background for the study of the deeper aspects of personality.

Erroneous Conceptions of the Nature of Religion. Under this head should be placed the beliefs (1) that religion gets its validity from being mysterious; and (2) that the particular form of religion which one has accepted is the only true one. It is important therefore that we reach a clear understanding regarding the truth of religions other than our own,[1] and of the relation of religion to mystery.

Religion and Mystery. Historically mystery has played an important part in religion. The religion of the savage is full of mystery. Even the lives of the founders of advanced religions are surrounded with mystery, as is proved by the historic controversies over Christ, Buddha, and Mohammed. Yet in spite of the great part mystery has played in religion, it is easy to overrate the extent of its domain. What the study of religion should do for

[1] The desirable attitude toward other religions is discussed below under "The Comparative Method."

us, is to open our eyes to the spiritual values about us, and to provide us with an answer to problems regarding the meaning of life and of the universe. Understanding, for example, what goes on in a man's nature that finally leads him to become a martyr for his convictions does not bring spiritual loss to the investigator. It is from such a background of understanding that great religious insights spring, not from ignorance.

Moreover we need have no fear that mystery will be banished from religion. The advance of knowledge in the inorganic sciences has in a very true way increased the mystery surrounding physical phenomena. The physical world was a very simple affair to Democritus and to the early modern philosophers. Today it is very far from being simple although a great deal more is known about it. As knowledge advances new and, if possible, more mysterious questions arise. In the realms of the psychical and the spiritual the same truth holds. Just as the physical world is a worthier object of reverence to the man of science than it is to the ignorant observer, so the spiritual world is a much worthier object of reverence to the person who has obtained a measure of intellectual insight than it can possibly be to the man without it. Even the great mystics have not held that the value of their religious experience depends on the mystery of it. They have not hesitated to tell all they know about mystic experiences. In so doing they do not seem to feel that the experience might lose some of its value.

That religious values and insights never spring from ignorance and that the vitality of religion depends on what is known or thought to be known needs to be emphasized. If this principle were accepted it would be recognized that a religion cannot be of maximum usefulness if its beliefs are in opposition to the knowledge

of the age, whether this knowledge is in the field of astronomy, biology, or psychology. If religion presents a world-view unacceptable to his understanding, it must fail in its efforts to aid an individual in developing a unified personality. Religious leaders should, therefore, make every effort to have religion keep step with advances in scientific and moral understanding. History shows that religion gains greatly when it readjusts its tenets and world-view in order to keep them in harmony with the best scientific thought. Two striking illustrations of this principle in Christianity are the Copernican revolution in astronomy and the Darwinian theories in biology. Organized religion found it hard to adjust itself to these new points of view, but when at last that adjustment did come, it was greatly enriched thereby. Similar enrichments may be expected to follow from a more adequate knowledge of religious phenomena. Signs of this are already apparent.[2]

Scientists, like all other men, make mistakes. It would, therefore, be unwise for religion to attempt to adjust itself to all the pronouncements of science. Religion is rightly conservative. It should seek as its philosophical basis the well established facts in science. Moreover if there are religionists who are hostile to science, so are there scientists who are hostile to religion. Quite naturally these hostile scientists like to stress implications of their discoveries which they think will discredit religion. Yet the relation between science and religion is essentially as stated above; namely, that if religion is to be of maximum use, it must seek to base its world-view on the best scientific thought of the age. When this attitude is accepted, there is little need to fear that a

[2] See Brooks and Charles, *Christianity and Auto-Suggestion.*

scientific study of religion will prove detrimental to the religious life of the student.

Methods of Studying the Psychology of Religion. The right manner of conducting the study of the psychology of religion is as important a factor in securing good effects in the way of religious development as the proper attitude toward it. The study may be so conducted as to be either destructive or constructive. Nor is it necessary that different methods be employed to obtain these contrary results. Where the emphasis is placed in interpretation upon the errors discovered, the study becomes destructive; to make it constructive emphasis in interpretation needs only to be placed upon the truths which underlie the errors. For instance a destructive study of the book of Genesis would place the emphasis upon the fact that it is not in agreement with modern science. It would consider the belief that Genesis is an inspired account disposed of by showing that it is a series of Babylonian myths. A constructive study of the same material would single out as the essential part of the account the conviction expressed that the world constitutes a moral order guaranteed by God, a being who rules over all and who created moral agents. It would point out that the earthly or heavenly origin of the account is a question of little interest in as much as our concern is with the religious experience and insight of men. It would urge that the element of anthropomorphism in the story should be expected, and it might go on to defend this making by man of a God in his own likeness against some of the shallow criticisms directed against it.

That the same material may be interpreted either constructively or destructively may be seen in the differing attitudes toward science growing out of the fact that it changes its conceptions from time to time. A hostile

critic will seek to show that science is discredited by its changing conceptions. He would not admit that these changes represent progress, nor would he consent that science had abandoned old theories and formulations, not because they were shown to be false, but because they had led the way to new theories that could account for the group of facts more simply or for a larger number of facts. The lover of science would point out that its progress consists in just these changes.

The same may be said regarding the differing attitudes taken concerning the development of religion. The destructive critic of religion may use the fact that religious conceptions are constantly changing to show that the religious view of the world is not to be trusted. The constructive critic, however, would view these changes in religion just as the lover of science views changes in science. The fact that religion advances from one conception to another, whenever succeeding conceptions embody truer and truer insights into the spiritual nature of reality, is a credit to it and indicates spiritual progress.

These illustrations serve to show that whether a given group of facts be interpreted destructively or constructively is largely a matter of attitude and emphasis. It is not possible, therefore, to classify methods themselves as either destructive or constructive since that depends on the use to which they are put. Let us take up three methods: (1) the pathological, (2) the comparative, and (3) the genetic methods, and show first how they may be used destructively and then how they can be used constructively.

(1) *The Pathological Method.* This method is highly regarded by psychologists. It is based on the assumption that the motives which operate in abnormal behavior differ in degree but not in kind from those that operate

in normal behavior. Pathological behavior, by telling us how normal motives operate when greatly magnified or unchecked by opposing motives, throws much light on normal behavior. It shows us the various motives and mechanisms of behavior as though they had been put under a magnifying glass.

The use of the pathological method, however, very easily gives rise to a bias in favor of the pathological. This is the case with writers who attempt to account for mysticism, asceticism, and other worldliness wholly in terms of neuroses and repressions. No doubt there have been and are ascetics and mystics who must be regarded as pathological subjects. But it should be recognized that these cases are to be used to throw light on the normal rather than as molds into which the normal is forced to fit. It is just as easy for the student of religion, as it is for Freud and his followers to overemphasize the pathological.

When the use of the pathological method produces a pronounced pathological bias it is spoiled as an aid to the knowledge and understanding of normal behavior. It takes disfigured and discolored views which obscure and distort the normal, and thus gives rise to a lop-sided attitude regarding the phenomena studied. This need not take place of logical necessity, it may creep in insidiously. Just as a study for years of sexual aberrations led Freud to misinterprete the place of sex in the life of the normal person, so for one who spends too much time studying the pathological forms of religion, religion itself may come to mean no more than a pathological phenomenon.

The difference between a destructive and constructive use of the pathological method may be briefly illustrated by a consideration of asceticism. There are some writers

who regard asceticism solely as a pathological phenomenon. No doubt some ascetic practices must be condemned as pathological, but this does not warrant the conclusion that asceticism is essentially pathological. If one does this the motives common to asceticism; namely, the determination of the ascetic to be true to his convictions and his desire to prove himself a man and worthy of God's grace, are dissolved into a sadistic or masochistic impulse or some pathological complex. Whoever takes this stand shows clearly that he understands neither asceticism nor the cultural situations which produce it. If we are to understand it at all truly, we must in some way enter into the thoughts and feelings of the ascetic and learn something of the social conditions and psychic states which give rise to his asceticism.

On the other hand, inference can be drawn from the pathological extremes of asceticism which will actually serve to throw light on religious phenomena. A study of these extremes may bring home to us the strength possible to the religious urge. It can show us how capable men are of every sacrifice for what they conceive to be right. It can reveal as few things else the great store of spiritual energy in man. At the same time it should be a warning, for in showing that the powerful urge which underlies religious life may take a pathological form, it should teach us that, if we are to incorporate the right ideals in our religious life, we must not fail to use all of our knowledge and our critical faculties as well. When the pathological forms of asceticism are viewed in this way they become a source of the understanding of religious life in general. In making a study of the psychology of religion, we should therefore not hesitate to use the pathological as one of our methods.

(2) *The Comparative Method.* The comparative study

of religion may be regarded as a necessity for an adequate understanding of it. As the name suggests, it is a comparative study of the religious life of different groups, for the purpose of discovering the common factors and sources of religious phenomena. This method enables us to take a broader and more comprehensive view of religion. Knowledge of other religions should lead to a better understanding of our own. Unfortunately, however, this is not always the case. Indeed a comparative study of religions may lead to the conclusion that all religions are false. This outcome is frequently due to the student's own very narrow religious attitude. If a person who has been taught that his religion is the only true one later discovers marked similarities between his religion and other religions, he will find it difficult to maintain belief in the exclusive claim to divine inspiration of his own religion. In this way, his own religion's seeming loss of prestige may tend to discredit all religion in his eyes. On the other hand, it sometimes happens that it is the dissimilarities between religions which discredit them all. In this case the investigator takes the stand that since the devotees of each of these dissimilar religions feel certain that they are right, religion must be a mere matter of opinion or taste.

In neither of these cases, let it be freely admitted, does the comparative study of religion lead to an increase of understanding and appreciation of the nature of religion. This, however, cannot be regarded as necessarily the fault of the comparative method. That method when correctly used will be found a great aid in obtaining a truer understanding of man's spiritual nature as it has embodied itself in religious activities. It would seem as if no student of the various religions could fail to be impressed with the fact that man everywhere takes seriously the

task of living and of raising his life to a higher plane. Nothing stands out more prominently from a survey of this material than the universal struggle of man for a life which he conceives to be noble and worthy. That the struggle deals with different problems in different cultures, and that different methods are devised and employed by different peoples, should not blind us to the presence of a great dynamic force in man urging him upward.

It is plain therefore that we must enter the mental life of their adherents and try to understand the various religions from the inside if the comparative study of them is to give us sound results. There is at present too great a tendency in psychology to neglect the inner side of experience and put the emphasis on the external. Now it is much easier to study religion from without than from within. Unless, therefore, the rôle of introspection is stressed, there is a danger that the comparative method will result in practice in emphasizing the external aspects of religions at the expense of the inner. Yet, in the case of any religion, it is the inner side of its life that we desire most to understand.

Understanding of the mental states of another can come only by relating his behavior to one's own. It therefore rests upon analogy. In the effort to understand the religious life of others analogy may proceed legitimately somewhat as follows: Since certain basic feelings and motives are actively present in me when performing a religious rite, I infer that mental states kindred to these are present in the minds of others who perform similar rites. This is the only way we have of arriving at an understanding of the subjective states of another. Strangely enough, however, there is the tendency on the part of some students to make an illegitimate

use of analogy in the case of religion in somewhat the following way: Since the heathen perform rites similar to those that I perform; and since the heathen are clearly superstitious, therefore I must be superstitious. Instead of proceeding from the known to the unknown, and by so doing finding a common fund of aspiration and spiritual cravings in all men, they go from the unknown to the known, and as a result begin to doubt that they themselves are spiritual beings.

(3) *The Genetic Method.* The genetic method, which is, as the derivation of its name suggests, an historical or evolutionary account of a subject or practice, enjoys so great a popularity that many regard it as the key to all mysteries. When applied to the study of social phenomena, the advantages claimed for it are: (1) It is easier to maintain an objective, non-partisan attitude in the study of primitive culture than in the study of our own; (2) By going back to the simple rudiments we begin with that which is most easily understood; (3) Our knowledge of any set of practices and ideals is much illuminated by a knowledge of their origin and development.[3]

Regarding this first claim, that the use of the genetic method makes for greater objectivity in our attitude, nothing need be said. It is agreed that we can maintain a more objective attitude in studying the beliefs and ideals of others than in the study of our own. Agreement can also be assumed regarding the third claim. It is not so obvious, however, that the second claim, that the simple and less developed are easier to understand than the complex and more developed, is true. This claim needs to be examined at least.

[3] *Cf.* Dewey & Tufts, *Ethics,* 3-4.

It no doubt seems easier to give an adequate account of the behavior of a unicellular organism than of a more complex one. But it is well to remind ourselves that each stage of advance in organic development throws more light on what precedes than the unicellular organism throws forward on what is to come. Life's on-going advance is simply not predictable at any stage. On the same principle I must challenge the claim that we can understand the behavior of a primitive group, that is, of a simple, comparatively unformed society, more readily than we can the behavior of a complex well-formed society. I do so because of a conviction that our own complex society with its better developed social relationships provides the clues for the understanding of the social life of all lesser developed groups. In other words, we must use our knowledge of our own group life to interpret the behavior and attitudes of primitive people instead of attempting to use our acquired knowledge of primitive groups to interpret our own. We must proceed from the better known to the less well known and the unknown.

The difficulties experienced in the actual study of the religions of primitive people add strength to the above argument. In the first place, the student of primitive religions has to depend to a great extent on interpretations and explanations purporting to be given by savages themselves. How can he be sure that they have described their religious life accurately? If one is inclined to make light of this difficulty, let him attempt to make clear to another what he himself means by God, the divine, the soul, the sacred, and other conceptions which play an important part in his own religious life. In the second place, if it be granted that the savage were capable of giving a full and true account of his religious conceptions and the feelings that accompany them, how could

a student be sure that travelers have understood correctly? Understanding depends on establishing points of contact. Or, to state it differently, one can understand the religious life of another only in terms of the already known to him. He cannot understand the meaning to the savage of God, of the divine, of taboo, or the sacred unless the descriptions given to him correspond at least remotely to something within his own experience.

This will stand out clearly if we descend to particulars and ask, what does the savage mean by *taboo*? For instance, what inference are we to draw from the fact that the savage regards the food of his chief as taboo? Our point of departure in search of an answer must be our own experience regarding things we consider taboo. It is taboo among us for a man to marry his sister. It is taboo to remove a placard indicating danger of fire. In some of the colleges of our country which have an enviable reputation for honesty among their student body, cheating in examinations is taboo. Or again, it is taboo among us for a young man to use a parasol to keep off the sunshine. Likewise the eating of snails is taboo among us; so also, the use of profanity by ladies. If we wish to get at how the savage feels about eating the food of his chief, our own feelings regarding things which we consider taboo must serve as a first clue.

Another abuse of the genetic method is the encouragement extracted from it by many in favor of treating the higher as merely the lower in a new dress. This pitfall, which has been very properly described as the fallacy of *the nothing but* meets us constantly in the literature of the vital and mental sciences. Psychology is *nothing but* physiology. The organic is *nothing but* a complicated form of the inorganic. Governments are *nothing but* the outgrowth of economic necessity. Consciousness is

nothing but movement in the cortex. The devoted love of man and woman is *nothing but* an outgrowth of the sex impulse. The love of parent for child is *nothing but* the functioning of an instinctive mechanism. The sacrifice of the patriot is *nothing but* the working of the gregarious instinct, similar to that which goes on in a herd of cattle. The great love of St. Teresa for Christ is *nothing but* an expression of thwarted sex impulse. Capital punishment is *nothing but* a survival of the law of revenge. Religion is *nothing but* a survival of superstition.[4]

We recognize the unsoundness of this procedure as soon as our attention is called to it. In all of these cases the expression *nothing but* serves as a diminutive to slur over or smudge out the qualitative differences between higher phenomena and lower. It should not be thought that the dropping of this fallacy will force us to discard the genetic method. Indeed that method is bound on right principle to recognize that the higher is different from the lower. The very attempt to trace the passage step by step from the lower to the higher shows that it recognizes that it is dealing with things that do not remain on the same level.

The Need of a Metaphysical Background for the Study of Personalty. No science is content with descriptions of phenomena *seriatim*. Every science

[4] See Coe, *Psychology of Religion*, Chapter XIII, for criticism of this fallacy. Professor Wright, influenced by the "Emergent Evolutionists," has suggested that the truth in the genetic method could in many cases be stated and the fallacy avoided by substituting "except for" in place of "nothing but," e. g. Except for cortical action consciousness could not function (in this life); except for the gregarious instinct patriotism would not arise. The higher levels of consciousness and patriotism cannot be identified with cortical action and gregariousness; they imply much more, but they owe to these their origin and continuance.

wishes to create a picture of the universe in which the phenomena of interest to it will occupy a place of central importance. The physicist has probably gone further than other scientists in giving an account of the universe in terms of the phenomena that specially interest him. The psychologist, on the other hand, has done little to construct a view of the universe that will give the phenomena that interest him a place of central importance. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the psychologist suffers unduly from the fear of being called a philosopher. Or it may be because he is so little of a philosopher that he feels it necessary to take the picture of the physicist as the final and complete description of reality. Perhaps the reason is that the deeper problems connected with personality do not appeal to him. Whatever the cause, the psychologist has failed to sponsor a view of the world that provides a place of central importance for personality. As a result he finds his science dropping down into and losing itself in biology, physiology, chemistry, physics, and mental tests.

Before the psychologist can satisfactorily solve the problems of personality he must construct a view of the universe which provides a place for such aspects of reality as spontaneity, purposive behavior, and value. The deeper facts of personality can never be made intelligible in a world-view drawn to satisfy the needs of inorganic science. If the science of human behavior is to prosper, the distinguishing characteristics of human nature must be recognized as something more than mere illusions. The physicists in boldly constructing a view of reality that enables them to explain phenomena in their field have contributed to all the sciences a valuable method of procedure. Too often, however, psychologists instead of making use of this method attempt to use the picture

drawn by the physicist. What does not fit into that picture they put down as of no consequence.

As a result many psychologists have abandoned such concepts as purpose, value, and consciousness since these things do not fit into the scheme of things drawn by the physicist. Therefore, so it is held, no use must be made of them in psychology. Behaviorism, which is the form this type of psychology has taken in America, is the logical result of trying to make personality intelligible in a universe from which all facts pertaining especially to personality have been excluded. If the object of psychologists be to become advertising experts and adepts at mental tests, they can probably steer clear of metaphysics. But if their aim be to understand human nature and personality they cannot.

The unruliness of such concepts as purpose, spontaneity, and value, as far as test tube, thermometer and microscope are concerned, has no doubt been an important factor in making for the popularity of "mechanical" psychologies. Science proceeds by analysis and by an arrangement of the products of analysis in a sequence. In doing so it is dealing with external relations. Along these paths it is never able to get a view of reality from within. It sees only the sequence, and the method of mechanics follows necessarily. Even when *purpose* is permitted to enter on the scene, it is treated as a link, also, in the causal sequence; looked at retrospectively it is a result of something external to itself, and looked at in turn prospectively it is a cause giving rise to another result. The same is true of all the distinctly mental facts. How can one study behavior from within?

Reflections of this sort shed light on how Kant was led to adopt the position that all phenomena must be understood as causally determined, since causality is a form of

the understanding. Bergson has shown that when we analyze anything we conceive it as laid out in space, and thus we get mere surface views of the phenomena analyzed. That surface views are valuable is universally admitted, but they must not be taken to exhaust reality. Besides the outer or external, there is also an inner reality. All behavior seen from without is a piece of history which lends itself to a mechanical formulation. Even our own behavior, if we view it only as a past performance, does so. But in this instance we are not compelled to let behavior become history and restrict our understanding to an external view. We can know our own behavior from within at the moments of its creation and then we become immediately aware of things in it which do not lend themselves to a mechanical formulation. By an immediate awareness, we form the acquaintance of will, purpose, desire—things which are very different in kind from those found in the mechanical order. But how can these be studied scientifically? We have no method of studying them while they are fluid, and once they congeal in the deed they are treated as possessing antecedents and giving rise to effects. Thus we are thrown again into a mechanical and outer view of them.

We have here one of the most baffling problems of metaphysics. Reality, if we look at it from within or as it is found within our consciousness, is purposive. Reality, if we look at it from without, is mechanical, and will always lend itself to mechanical formulation. What is the relation between these two aspects, or forms of reality? Which reveals most truly the nature of reality? Probably the majority of philosophers are inclined to the view that reality as revealed in one's consciousness, that is, the psychical and purposive order, throws the more light upon its essential nature. They are led to do so for three

reasons: (1) Much that is mechanical in appearance is obviously so relative to the nature of the mind perceiving it that it cannot be regarded as the fundamental form of reality. (2) If it be assumed that the mechanical order is the fundamental one, the existence of purposes whether regarded as real or illusory cannot be accounted for. (3) On the other hand, if the purposive aspect of nature be its fundamental aspect, we can easily go from it to the mechanical order, for expression of the purpose necessarily gives rise to the mechanical. Purposes can be expressed only by the device of ways and means that are mechanical. We have only to examine our own behavior to see that this is so. How can a purpose get itself expressed, or how can a purpose function, other than by the use of the mechanical?

No doubt science accommodates itself more naturally to the study of the mechanical aspect of reality. This is as true of psychology as of the other sciences. But if psychology is to give us an adequate account of human personality it must not let this predilection for the mechanistic rule out all the facts that are inconsistent with that bias. It must not cling to a view of the universe which provides no room for the one whole class of facts that are most immediately known. It need not go so far as to say that the mechanical order is merely some inner purposive order seen from the outside, but it must go far enough to recognize and assign an important place to an inner and purposive order. The fact that it is unable to do much with reality as seen from the inside should not cause it to deny its existence or proclaim its uselessness. That dilemma should rather serve as a warning against its easy though inadequate mechanical account of behavior. In brief, psychology must take more seriously

its task of rendering intelligible the inner side of personal activity.

The aim of any science is to give a self-consistent interpretation of all the facts it deals with, not to cast out such facts as do not fit into theories to which it is partial. Now the facts that are dealt with in psychology belong to both the mechanical and purposive order. It is unscientific and destructive of all real understanding of personality to deny the purposive order simply because it will not conform to a scientific formulation that was designed merely for the mechanical. The true method to pursue here would be to try to devise formulas that will embrace both orders of facts. Until this is done psychologists should recognize and own up that their science is far from adequately developed. This state of affairs should stimulate them to greater efforts to obtain a more complete survey of human nature, and serve as a warning against the treatment of such facts of personality as purpose, values, and conscious direction as illusions.

As a matter of fact, psychology cannot proceed far without these conceptions of purpose and value. Any interpretation of human behavior which makes no use of them strikes us as being hopelessly strained and inadequate. Indeed we can hardly resist the tendency to account for nature's activity in general in terms of the urges and desires we immediately perceive within ourselves. So great is the pressure of this tendency that in the past all nature was interpreted psychologically. Even today we still apply to the inorganic world psychic terms such as attraction, repulsion, force. Scientists of the inorganic have rightly protested against psychologizing physics. Many psychologists are so impressed by this protest that they wish to mechanize mind and personality. From one extreme we swing to another.

What has been said of psychology in general applies in particular to the psychology of religion. For in this branch of psychology, if nowhere else, we are interested in that inner side of reality of which the outward side is the mechanical. The facts of man's inner life must here be made facts of primary importance. Moreover if religious phenomena, such as prayer, conversion, and worship, are to be made intelligible, we cannot stop with a mere description of them. We must devise a view of the universe which provides a place of central importance for such phenomena. Just as the physicist advances theories of the nature of the universe, devised for no other purpose than to make intelligible the phenomena he studies, so the student of religion must advance theories purposely devised to make intelligible the facts with which he deals. The phenomena with which the physicist deals lead to a certain view of reality, but do the phenomena with which the student of religion deals lead to the same view? The question has already been answered. Man's spiritual life is not illuminated or made intelligible by the view of reality taken to explain physical phenomena. If we are to obtain a convincing understanding and appreciation of the spiritual and its place in the universe, it is necessary that the *method* of the physicist be used over again on this different material rather than that his *results* be taken over unmodified and unadded to.

Psychology and Theology. The foregoing discussion has brought us to the threshold of theology which has always attempted to construct a view of the universe that would give the place of central importance to man's spiritual struggle. Perhaps the method by which it has attempted to do this has been too *a priori* and dogmatic. Certainly its efforts have met with little favor among the psychologists. If, however, psychology and theology

could be persuaded to coöperate in devising an intelligible account of personality, both would be the gainers. In abandoning its aloofness from metaphysics, psychology would no longer feel itself restricted to the narrow view of the universe drawn by the physicist, and that would inevitably lead it to a richer understanding of personality. Theology in turn would gain the aid of a most influential science.

No doubt this coöperation would result in considerable modifications in theology. As for the light which psychology may throw on the existence of God, theologians have nothing to lose and possibly much to gain. It has been pointed out that the purposes of man in the act of self-expression must manifest themselves in ways which can be mechanically described. Likewise, if God expresses his purposes in human life, those purposes must express themselves within and through those activities which psychologists study. It follows, therefore, no matter what the findings of psychology may be, no matter, for instance, how far it may press its explanations in terms of suggestion, or how it may describe the processes that occur in prayer, it is never in a position where it can deny the presence of God in these processes.[5] On the other hand, psychology in its efforts to make intelligible the religious life of man may well lead to a view of the universe in harmony with the view of it given in the religious consciousness.

SUMMARY. In this chapter, it has been pointed out

[5] Leuba's discussion of this subject in Chapter XI of his book, *A Psychological Study of Religion,* is based throughout on the assumption that theologians are concerned with only the idea of a transcendent God. The chapter would lose all point if he had the point of view of God being immanent. God is conceived more and more by the modern world as immanent, and doubtless many of the theologians quoted in that chapter conceived of God in that way.

that in spite of the benefits that might be expected from studying the psychology of religion, there are some who fear the study may prove deterimental to religious development. It was admitted that the fear is in part valid, for the study does at times undermine the religious life of the student. This result, however, was shown to be due principally to one of three remediable causes: (1) Erroneous ideas regarding religion; (2) Improper use of methods of conducting the study which are sound in themselves; (3) Unwillingness to deal with the facts of the purposive order. Each of these causes was discussed and an attempt was made to show how its errors might be corrected and the study made constructive.

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Chapter II

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Before we can proceed most profitably with our study of the psychology of religion it is necessary to make a hurried survey of those aspects of human nature that appear to be especially important for an understanding of religious behavior. The present chapter is designed to do this and is not to be taken as a brief outline of psychology. Such a survey should prove helpful even to the reader who is somewhat familiar with general psychology; to the reader who is not brief as it is, it is well-nigh indispensable.

Instincts. This description may well begin with an account of the inborn motivators or determinants which seek outlet in well-defined paths of behavior, commonly called the instincts. When they are referred to as structural units of the nervous system they are thought of as a chain of reflexes or unlearned responses; when they are referred to as teleological factors of human nature they are defined as purposes, desires or interests belonging to the native endowment of man.

The view of instincts as structural units of the nervous system presents difficulties which need not be considered here.[1] It contains no promise of help to the beginner in his initial understanding of religious behavior or the development of the religious consciousness. He is more in-

[1] For a criticism of this view see article on "Instinct," in *The Journal of Social Forces* for March, 1925.

terested in an account of religious behavior in psychological than in physiological terms.

The position here taken is that instincts are purposes, desires, or interests belonging to the native endowment of man. Although this understanding of instinct has been criticized and rejected by a number of writers,[2] in my opinion it is based on the most intelligible and reasonable view of human behavior offered to our choice. Unbiased observation of human behavior reveals inborn preferences and purposes of more or less specific types in man's possession. Yet a bias in favor of a mechanical interpretation of human behavior, which explains these wholly in terms of stimulus-response bonds, induces many psychologists to reject the presence of any purposive character in instincts. Instincts as organs of purpose do not fit well into a mechanical universe. Therefore the purposive element in them is dismissed. If, however, the universe is looked upon as showing a purposive bent, this conception of a like characteristic in instincts presents no great difficulty, for we should expect that bent of the universe to report itself in man and in other organisms in due degree.

On the basis of the teleological view of instincts, as we examine human behavior there seem to be four great interests or purposes characteristic of all normal human beings, namely, self-preservation, development or growth, reproduction, and companionship.[3] Everyone as a matter of course runs from danger and fights for his life. Every normal human being obeys the bent of his nature and grows up as a matter of course. No human being would thwart this instinct of development and remain a

[2] See Josey, *The Social Philosophy of Instinct.*

[3] *Cf.* Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* Chapter III.

child. In fact, the impulses to growth are so fundamental that it goes on night and day without the conscious effort of the individual. Yet this urge may become conscious under proper conditions. All forms of life are subject to an urge to engage in activities that insure the continuance of its race upon the earth. Finally, all human beings, in fact all gregarious animals, experience an inborn drive away from solitude in the direction of companionship with their fellows.

Development of the Sentiments. Instincts, are rather vague and formless, buried from sight, as it were, until they can get themselves expressed. It is in experience that their bent becomes exposed and definite, or so to speak, "canalized." Thus for instance, the instinct whose drive is in the direction of reproduction may take a number of wrong roads, many of which are pathological, or it may be "canalized," i.e. steered into the right ones. When the reproductive or sex instinct has thus centered on one person of the opposite sex, other instincts may come to its aid. For example, the generalized bents in the direction of social solidarity becomes specific and keener with reference to companionship with this person than with any other. More than one fresh impetus to development may also find its spur in this push to find a mate. Thus several instincts may be brought to a focus in the one enterprise. This is the way that sentiments are formed.[4]

The development of sentiments may likewise be illustrated by reference to one's attachment for his occupation. The occupation may first have been engaged in as a means of earning a living, i. e. the push was the instinct for self preservation. But later the instinct of develop-

[4] Compare McDougall's account of the development of sentiments in Chapter VI of his *Introduction to Social Psychology.*

ment may put the stamp of its approval on the opportunities for self-expansion which this occupation is providing. The congenial acquaintances made may win over the instinct of gregariousness to its side. A strong attachment for it, therefore, gets formed.

In the same way sentiments of justice, of bravery, and of duty get formed. Our desire to be at one with our fellows, i. e. the push of the instinct of gregariousness makes us very sensitive to their praise or blame. When we act in a manner thought by our group to be just, or brave, or in line with our duty, we merit and receive its praise. When we act otherwise we merit and receive its blame. In the one case we find shelter within the solidarity of the group; in the other we may experience and suffer from feelings of isolation. Moreover when we act in ways that we agree with the group to which we belong are just and brave, the instinct of personal development is smiling its approval on our conduct. Our feelings of positive worth are thus enhanced. We recognize that we have not played the part of a weakling. Hence by their fruits, ideals of justice, bravery, and duty become powerful as sentiments. This is due to their intimate associations with the bent of two of the most powerful of the instincts—the internal hunger and thirst for sociability and for self-expansion.

Conflicts. Frequently, however, our instincts engage in civil war. Reference has already been made to the fact that the sex instinct may develop in ways severely condemned by society. Then, inevitably a conflict arises between the sex instinct and the desire for social approval. Likewise the instinct of self-preservation may give rise to habits that are frowned upon by society, such as a grasping disposition, dishonesty in business, or cowardice in an emergency. Or the instinct of self-preserva-

tion may put its veto on a risk sanctioned by our instinct to self-expansion. Moreover within the same instinct conflicts may occur, as when a man finds himself in love with more than one woman. Or conflict may arise within the instinct of development, as when two courses promise growth, both attractive, but only one of which can be taken. The conflict consists in the necessity of choosing between them.

There are a number of ways of dealing with these conflicts. One may sit passively by and let the conflicting impulses fight it out. The higher self abdicates when all impulses and desires are allowed their fling in this way, as if they were of equal worth. The particular bent of the particular instinct that wins may as well have been drawn by lot. Another way is to devise some compromise by which the one may gain a measure of satisfaction of a higher order which leads the other to withdraw its objections. Here intelligence enters and proposes a substitute gratifying to both impulses. This is the method of sublimation. Still another way of dealing with conflicts is to turn one's back on them by segregating the parties to them in different compartments of the mind. By this means contact is cut off between the opposing interests and conflict avoided. For example, a man may put his religious beliefs in one compartment and his scientific beliefs in another, and refuse to let them have any dealings together. A fourth way of trying to settle these conflicts is to pseudo-rationalize one's desire by giving laudable though make-believe reasons for acts growing out of ignoble motives. A fifth and last way of dealing with the conflict is to repress the disapproved desire or impulse and forbid it expression. This is merely taking advantage of the universal tendency to forget that which is painful. Accordingly desires or impulses which have been put on

one's blacklist are ignored as far as possible; they are repressed or driven into the unconscious.[5]

The Unconscious. To many the unconscious seems a mysterious no man's land. In reality it is not. Suppose the reader were to try to take a complete inventory of his mind. Like the icebergs, the part on display in consciousness at any given moment would amount to a fragment compared to the mass below the line of consciousness. That submerged mass would consist of great stores of knowledge, memories, emotions, desires, ideals, sentiments, habits, prejudices, the fundamental instincts, and the forms of mental processes. Possibly that list would not exhaust its contents. Such a survey makes clear the fact that your consciousness makes direct use of only a small part of the capital of your mind in the course of any ordinary day's transactions.

The content of mind that lies submerged below the line of the conscious is not quiescent, for a great many mental processes go on also therein. The organic sensations of respiration and digestion afford a background against which we measure time, yet we are seldom conscious of them. The sensations in the semi-circular canals of the ear are of service for the maintenance of an upright position, yet they seldom obtrude upon our consciousness. We may also have unconscious perceptions, as in the case of walking along absorbed in thought or in conversation when we avoid obstacles, and yet are not conscious of them. Or we may enter and be conscious of only a few objects in a room; later in a state of hypnosis we may be able to recall many more, showing that our photographic powers of perception are much wider than those registered in the active consciousness at the time of their taking.

[5] *Cf.* Tansley, *The New Psychology,* Chapter X.

The same is true of emotions. We may be so unconscious of the anger noticed by the person with whom we are talking that his caution not to get angry will come as a big surprise. Processes of reasoning may go on below the line of the conscious. A person who has long meditated on a problem and found the solution hopeless may dismiss the subject from his thoughts. But all of a sudden some time afterward the solution flashes into mind, showing that the operations begun in consciousness have been completed in this other hemisphere. This often happens in the work of organizing material for an essay, or of solving a mathematical problem. It probably most frequently occurs with poets, however, in the making of poems. The ability to learn is also true of this other half of the mind. If one has two hours to study a given subject, he will learn more if he studies an hour and then rests that half of his mind and lets the other half work the second hour and then resumes his studying for a third hour. During the one hour's intermission a process of unconscious learning, or cerebration as it is usually called, has gone forward. Purposes likewise may operate without our knowledge. A person may work very hard on a given task without realizing his true purpose in doing so. Pseudo-rationalization affords many illustrations of this ignorance of our real motive in pursuing a certain course.

The psychoanalysts emphasize the evil importance of certain mental sets and complexes existing in this other half of the mind. They are more interested in abnormal and undesirable complexes, "fixed ideas" and depressing sentiments than they are in normal states. But these uninventoried chambers of the mind contain not only undesirable complexes but also desirable ones as well. Many of the higher determinants of our behavior are buried deep beneath the surface therein. For a mental set or

complex need not be one that can be fairly taxed as undesirable to find lodgment in these buried regions. Thus a man may engage in a business which he knows is wrong because its offer of an easy living causes him to repress his longings to stand well with the best citizens of the community and his desire to make his method of earning a living a means of personal development. However, in spite of the repression these ideal longings have not been blotted out of existence. In this case unfortunately the ideal elements, rather than the unworthy, are the ones repressed in the mind's dungeons.

Multiple Personality. Conflicts between expressions and repressions may increase in number and may become so acute as to divide the personality, destroy its integrity and give rise to two personalities. This means that the repressed elements have wound themselves on a common spool, gathering unto themselves all the disaffected strays.[6] Moreover every disappointment and set back thereafter helps to consolidate one and weaken the other of these two personalities. As a result the personality composed mainly of the formerly submerged elements may in time become strong enough to become the dominant one.

Disorganization of the primary self may go so far that neither personality shares in the memories of the experiences of the other. Otherwise the old conflicts in their unbearably acute forms would remain. It is in pursuance of a peace-at-any-price policy that the mind mistakenly and unsuccessfully splits itself in two.

It is interesting to note that the radical alteration in the individual, following the replacement of a single per-

[6] See Prince, "Psychogenesis of a Multiple Personality," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* 1919; and "Miss Beauchamp," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* 1920.

sonality torn asunder with internal conflict by two more homogeneous ones that alternate in the saddle, is not the result of any significant addition to the content of mind. The content remains practically the same. It is a double instead of the former single orientation that brings about the great change in behavior and outlook.

The Projective Mechanism. By the projective mechanism is meant the tendency to find in the external world that which is in harmony with our subjective states. It is displayed by the boy in the forests who sees all sorts of dangerous things that simply are not there. Likewise the person who is depressed, or habitually anxious, has a hard time with all sorts of difficulties and dangers that owe their imaginary existence to his depressed condition. These depressions and anxieties he projects abroad, and as an extreme result suffers from hallucinations. Desire also may become so intense that it causes hallucinations. Thus the man dying of thirst may see before him a clear stream of water, or the lover may attribute to the beloved perfections which exist only in his own mind.

Conscience. Conscience is the name of that phase of our character which deals with moral situations. Students frequently raise the question, Is conscience innate? Our answer is that it is partly though not wholly so. All men are impelled by their own needs and interests to pass value judgments on the dilemmas of conduct. Some acts seem right or good, some wrong or bad. The making of such judgments does not depend on training, but practice should improve their quality. Moreover all normal men when they judge that a given cause of conduct is right feel an obligation to act in that way. Nor does this feeling of obligation arise from experience. Hence, conscience viewed as the stubborn tendency to classify activities as permissible or forbidden and as the feeling of

obligation to follow the course judged permissible is innate. The particular judgments at which we arrive are determined largely by previous practice, our own and others.

The important thing to recognize in this matter of conscience is the fact that just as man is rational, imaginative, and aesthetic, so is he moral. A rational being placed in a partly unmanageable world where only a portion of what he values can be realized will inevitably pass moral judgments.[7] In many the feeling of obligation to act in accordance with these judgments is so compelling that it overbalances all other considerations and makes them willing to undergo great danger, deprivation, and suffering in their behalf. History is full of martyrs who have done so.

Suggestibility. Suggestibility is one of the most important traits of the mind for an understanding of religious phenomena. In order to arrive at a clear understanding of the meaning of suggestibility I shall first describe several types of activity due to it.

A professor of chemistry tried this experiment. One day he uncorked an empty bottle and asked the class to signal him as soon as they detected its odor. In a short time practically all its members had signaled. The sense of odor was due to suggestion. Actually, the bottle was not even faintly odorous.

The yogi of India are said to make trees grow before the eyes of an astonished crowd. After planting a seed, the holy man moves his hand over it in higher and higher circles and the spectators testify that a tree appears and grows rapidly, sometimes reaching a height of fifty feet within a few minutes. Or he may throw a rope in the air

[7] *Cf.* Otto, *Things and Ideals,* 119 ff.

and they will witness that it remains rigid there as a pole. Before their eyes he is then seen to climb it hand over hand, the gaping crowd continuing to watch him until he disappears in the sky.[8]

Hallucinations just as realistic have been produced by religious leaders in our country. Some of our evangelists by drawing a vivid picture of hell have caused their audiences to see hell opening before their eyes. Jonathan Edwards was very skilful in producing this phenomenon. Davenport states that when Edwards talked of hell, some members of his congregation wept, some turned pale, some cried aloud, "some fainted, some fell into convulsions, some suffered thereafter from impaired health, and some lost their reason."[9]

The reading of the descriptions of a disease in a patent medicine advertisement will "give" some readers that disease. Medical students often complain that they have discovered that they are suffering themselves from the disease under study at the time. More extreme examples of the power of suggestion are the very real blisters raised on his person by telling a man under hypnosis that he is being burnt with a hot iron. In reality no heat whatsoever has been applied. Death even may be produced by suggestion.

Conversely the Coué school claim that they have yet to discover the disease which cannot sometimes be cured by suggestion.[10] Nor is the power of suggestion as a means of healing sickness a recent discovery. Christian

[8] For these and numerous other illustrations of the power of suggestion see Ross, *Social Psychology,* chapter on Suggestibility.

[9] Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals,* 108; see also Chapters VI and VIII of the same for illustrations of the power of suggestion to sweep religious gatherings.

[10] *Cf.* Baudouin, *Suggestion and Auto-Suggestion.*

Science is based on it. During the Middle Ages sacred relics and the rings of the rulers of countries were very effective in curing disease. In primitive society therapeutics is based almost wholly on suggestion.

Suggestibility frequently elicits responses otherwise contrary to the individual's whole bringing-up and ordinary inclinations. For instance, a young man who was hypnotized and commanded to take the seat occupied by a young lady requested the lady to give him her seat. She refused. After an argument he seized the chair and ejected the lady.

The behavior of the members of a mob is similarly determined. They do not act in response to their own characters, but are swayed and dominated by crowd impulses. As a result they may participate in crimes that would appall them under ordinary circumstances. At other times, however, a crowd impulse may lead the individuals composing it to take part in acts of bravery and heroism that excite admiration. As Durkheim says, "Under the influence of the general exaltation, we see the most mediocre and inoffensive bourgeois become either a hero or a butcher."[11]

It is not necessary that the group or even a representative of it be present for group suggestion to exercise its power. Group symbols may serve equally well. Thus the cross rouses deep religious emotions in the Christian; so likewise does the crescent among Mohammedans. In general, places of worship arouse through association the emotions felt in repeated experiences as a member of a worshiping congregation. In the same way the flag stirs

[11] *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 211. For a graphic account of mob psychology see LeBon, *The Crowd, A Study of the Popular Mind.*

in the discharged soldier something of the patriotic spirit fostered by his life in the service.

Group ideals operate in the same way. The individual who acts in accord with the ideals and demands of his group feels supported and sustained by his sense of the collective spirit of approval back of him. On the other hand, violation of the group ideals causes him to feel somewhat crushed and isolated. The group ideals serve as the mandates of the group, and thus act as the spokesmen of the group through association and suggestion.

Man is not the only animal that is suggestible. All gregarious animals are influenced by crowd impulses. The individual wolf is bolder in the pack than alone. The bee is unable to live apart from its fellows. Cattle and horses fight bravely in herds. We are warranted, therefore, in thinking of suggestibility as an important feature of gregarious animals. Indeed such animals seem to receive through the channels of suggestion from the group something which is essential to their well-being.

Suggestibility therefore may be defined as a psychic bond between gregarious animals, which qualifies them to receive in a non-rational way new determinants of behavior from the group to which they belong. Any determinant of behavior which comes from without and is accepted by the individual in virtue of his sensitiveness to the presence or opinion of others may be called a suggestion.[12]

Determinants of the Degree of Suggestibility. The factors determining degree of suggestibility may be divided into the subjective and the objective. To the first group belong desire, fear, expectancy, state of knowledge, mental training or organization, and a more

[12] What is here included under suggestibility is sometimes treated under three heads—suggestibility, imitation, and sympathy.

or less pronounced tendency to let the ego slip from the fore of consciousness. To the second group belong such factors as the prestige of the source of the suggestion, the strength or volume of its impact, the physiological condition of the subject, and crowd contagion. I wish to consider these factors in the order named.

(1) *Subjective Factors:* (a) *Desire.* Strong desire renders its subject suggestible in the general direction, which the desire wishes to travel. For instance, "A man who is consumed with the passion of political ambition needs only to be told by a few friends that he is the logical candidate for the legislature or the governorship to plunge with confident enthusiasm into the campaign. Those few favoring voices are multiplied in his too willing ears to the volume of a loud popular demand. The girl who is really in love with a young man accepts with unquestioning faith the slightest assurance that his character is irreproachable."[13]

The strong party man finds it easy to believe reports of corruption in the opposition party, but not so easy to believe similar charges of corruption against his own party.

To what an extreme extent desire may act as a factor increasing suggestibility may be clearly seen in its influence in producing illusions and hallucinations. It was not uncommon in ancient times for soldiers for instance, when hard pressed, to see their gods apparently fighting for them in physical presence on the field. Constantine claimed he had seen in battle a cross bearing the inscription, "By this sign, conquer." During the last war English soldiers at Mons when that day seemed lost reported seeing angels fighting at their side. Similar visions are of

[13] Gardner, *Psychology and Preaching*, 229.

quite common occurrence with religious devotees. Monks espied St. Peter fighting on the walls of Constantinople just before it fell into the hands of the Turks.

The importance of desire or bias as a factor in our reactions to arguments is notorious. If the trend of the argument is in defense of previously held and much cherished beliefs we note its strong points and overlook its weak ones. If it be opposed to them we have eyes only for all its fallacies and are blind to its strong points. Forewarned is forearmed, and the extent to which these citations show that the bias of desire increases our susceptibility to suggestion makes it plain that we need to be on constant guard against our readiness to accept suggestions in line with our prejudices and preconceptions, and that we must learn to recognize our unwillingness to listen with an open mind to our opponents.

(b) *Fear.* The importance of fear as a factor increasing suggestibility can be seen in the different effects that the possibility of an attack of seasickness has on the first voyager and the seasoned sailor. Fear of it may make the novice sick and the veteran go scot free for the lack of it. The savage who died from eating the food intended for his chief died from fear of what would happen to him for violating such an important taboo. The efficacy of magic in accomplishing its design to injure its client's enemies is the result of fear induced by suggestion. Among some savages, for example, where it is the custom to sing over one's spear and then shoot it in the direction of the hated man, death at times is reported to result from the fright thus caused.[14] In all such cases it is obvious that the strength of the suggestion depends largely on the strength or weakness of the fear.

[14] Crawley, *The Mystic Rose,* 122.

(c) *Expectancy.* Expectancy may be regarded as a coördinate factor with desire and fear in producing suggestions endowed with any great force. Without a lively expectation that what he desires or fears is going to happen soon, the chances are that no man will obtain by the power of suggestion what he desires nor suffer what he fears. Thus the soldiers desired and expected aid; the mystics desired and expected visions; the first voyager feared and expected seasickness; the savage feared to the extent of expecting death from the magically treated arrow or from eating food intended for his chief.

Faith cures are obvious illustrations of this intimate relation between expectancy and suggestibility. The power of suggestion to cure disease depends upon how high the mercury rises in the thermometer of expectancy. The part of those who gain the credit for faith cures is to work the expectancy of the patient up to a white heat of faith that the cure will take place. For this reason the reputation for successful cures of the healer is one of his important assets. That reputation in the beginning may be due to the personality of the healer or to an office he holds. Sacred relics may acquire a reputation for curative powers. Paracelsus, who lived in the first half of the sixteenth century, has clearly stated the matter:

> Whether the object of your faith is real or false, you will nevertheless obtain the same effects. Thus, if I believe in St. Peter's statue as I would have believed in St. Peter himself, I shall obtain the same effects that I would have obtained from St. Peter; but that is superstitution. Faith, however, produces miracles, and whether it be true or false faith, it will always produce the same wonders.[15]

[15] Cutten, *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity,* 203.

Such phenomena demonstrate how great is the influence of expectation in producing suggestions possessing real force.

(d) *Knowledge.* The state of our knowledge has much to do with the nature of the suggestions likely to take root in our minds. We naturally tend to believe from mildly to intensely what is told us, unless some good reason exists for disbelief. Knowledge in a given subject is good ground for rejecting conflicting statements made pertaining to that subject. Lack of knowledge accounts in large part for the credulity of the child. His absence of knowledge supplies him no reason to question the most fantastic stories. But lack of knowledge operates the same way with a scientist. His mind may be very poor soil for a stray suggestion pertaining to his own subject, but in matters outside of his subject he may be as credulous and suggestible as the next one.

The influence of the state of our knowledge on suggestibility of our minds has been admirably described by Gardner as follows:

> The growth of a mind is like the development of a new country. At first it is open to invasion from every direction, with nothing to determine the character of the incoming peoples and nothing to control the distribution of the rapidly increasing population, except the configuration of its surface and the location of its natural resources. The infantile period of the individual life corresponds to the earlier stages of this development. Into the new country come pouring people from everywhere with little regulation, received with the open hospitality of the wide, vacant, fertile spaces. Just so the child-mind takes whatever comes to it. It simply

cannot critically examine what is told it; it has no criteria established in its experience by which to judge. If it is assured that in fairyland men grow as tall as trees, its own experience may have become extensive enough to make the statement appear wonderful, perhaps, but not impossible; and maybe its ideas of trees and men are so indefinite and uncorrelated that the statement does not cause wonder, much less scepticism. At this stage almost every impression which the child receives comes to it with the force of reality. It is by suggestion alone that its stock of ideas is increased.[16]

(e) *Organization.* The organized mind is the well trained mind; the untrained mind is the unorganized mind. As a person advances in mental organization, in the integration of the various elements of mind, changes take place in his responsiveness to suggestion. With the well trained mind a given piece of activity tends to become an expression of personality as a whole rather than the expression of an isolated element in that personality. The importance of this factor of mental training in determining the kinds and degree of suggestibility to which a person is subject may be easily pointed out. All of us have seen how ready people who are dominated first by one outside influence and then by another are to act in accordance with any passing suggestion that once gets their attention. These people are lacking, we say, in the power of independent judgment. They are therefore so much clay in the hands of their companions. Their behavior expresses how little character they possess. It is determined far too much by the suggestions of others. As the organization of their characters takes place they

[16] Gardner, *Psychology and Preaching,* 219-220.

are less and less influenced by passing suggestions, whether these arise from within or without.

Not only is the degree to which the organization of the mind has been carried an important factor in determining the kinds and degrees of suggestibility, but the manner of organization is also important. By manner of organization is meant character as determined by the dominant attitudes of the individual. A person who cultivates a suspicious attitude, who on all occasions insists that he must be "shown," may close his mind to suggestions regardless of his ignorance, or of his need to act according to the direction of others. He has organized his mind in such a way as to close it to many good outside influences. Another person will cultivate the opposite attitude and his character will become dominated by open-mindedness. He does not find that every one is dishonest and trying to cheat him. Such an attitude of trust in his fellows inevitably makes him suggestible in directions to which the suspicious are immune, and non-suggestible in directions which are pitfalls to the suspicions.

We must recognize, then, that both the degree and amount of organization or training and the mental attitudes cultivated are important determinants of the degree and kinds of suggestibility.

(f) *Self-Consciousness.* The final subjective factor we shall consider is the difference in people in the ease or difficulty of letting the ego or self slip from the fore of consciousness. The ego of one individual will stand its ground and throw around itself barriers which prevent the ready acceptance of outside influences. Another style of ego which is readily swept off its feet by group contagion may be thought of as much more given to let down the bars that open the way for outside influences to enter and take possession. This style of ego

steps aside and the spirit of the group takes its place. The detached person finds this hard to do. When others have become absorbed and have forgotten themselves in the crowd, these remain onlookers. By constitution or training they seem unable usually to let themselves go. They therefore are unresponsive to the abandon, elation, and enthusiasm of the crowd.

(2) *Objective Factors:* (a) *Prestige.* First among the outside factors which determine the degree of suggestibility we put prestige. A suggestion proceeding from a source that has great prestige is more likely to exercise sway than one from an ordinary source. This is true whether the influential source of the suggestion be an institution, an object, or a person. A man of impressive appearance, who has a big reputation and a large following, speaks with an authority that easily wins new converts. At the beginning of his enterprise or mission the same man wins his first few converts with difficulty. And so with an institution. An institution such as the Christian church has little prestige in a Mohammedan group. It is slow work indeed for it to get its ideas accepted. In a Christian country, on the contrary, by virtue of its great prestige it can draw new members into its fold with comparatively little difficulty. The same is true of objects which we have been taught to regard as sacred. Holding a copy of the Bible in the hand, for instance, confers added prestige on a message for which its authority is claimed. Various images have acquired a degree of sacredness which makes it possible for them to become at least the occasion for the working of miracles. Suggestibility varies with the variations in prestige of the source of the suggestion.

(b) *Strength or Volume of Impact.* If you should walk down the street and a passing friend should remark

"you look ill," the incident would probably make little if any impression. Were another and another person to make the same remark, you would probably begin to be disturbed. Likewise if the occupant were to tell us that something ghostly happened in his house, we should probably smile to ourselves. If, however, reports kept coming from various sources to the same effect we should very likely begin to take them more seriously. The European who goes to China at first smiles at the superstitions of the people; but in time he may come to half share them. If adults can be affected to this extent by the beliefs and attitudes of the group in which they find themselves, children must be affected even more. They do not possess the defensive armor of a trained mental organization against outside influences. Hence, it is by the working of this principle of strength or volume of impact from their environment that children inevitably accept the ideals, beliefs, and attitudes of the group in which they are brought up.

(c) *Physiological Conditions.* Hunger and sleepiness tend to increase the degree of suggestibility. People in a famished condition are more likely to experience hallucinations than the same people when well fed. Miners entombed for several days are frequently subject to hallucinations. Among primitive peoples this law is well understood and the initiation rites in some tribes provide that the youth shall take to the woods and live alone for a while as best he can. It is expected during his stay that he will have a vision. He himself expects one. The realization of his expectation is no doubt aided by his solitude, hunger, thirst, and exposure.

Drowsiness or sleepiness also furnish favorable conditions for the efficacy of suggestion. Mental healers, therefore, urge their patients to recite positive suggestions

of health to themselves with all possible force of faith just before going to sleep and before rising, inasmuch as at these times, it is held, our skeptical tendencies are most dormant and least likely to interfere. Suggestions may then succeed, which would have been failures had the mind been more alert at the time that the attempt to implant them was made. Hypnosis illustrates this principle in an extreme form.

(d) *Crowd Contagion.* Membership in a crowd is a favorable condition for the reception of the suggestions that the crowd takes up. In the old time theaters, the packed crowd jostling one another in the pit was always more enthusiastic in its responses to the changing moods of the players than the people who had comfortable seats in the parquet. Public speakers recognize this advantage and insist that if small their audience take only the front section of seats rather than seat themselves a few here and a few there. And revivalists see to it carefully that the benches used in their tents are crowded tightly together. A crowd or audience which is a closely packed physical unit offers the more favorable chance for the formation of what is termed a psychological crowd, or a like-minded group.

Value of Suggestibility. The habit is common of looking upon suggestibility as a sign of weakness, or even as an ignoble trait. We confine our attention to the injurious ways in which children and the ignorant are suggestible. People who have no opinion of their own, people who are swayed by every passing fancy and fad, are regarded as the sole product of suggestion. This is to misunderstand the place of suggestibility in the life of man, and makes it necessary here to point out important and valuable rôles that suggestibility plays in human behavior and development.

In the socialization and moralization of the individual suggestibility is an essential factor. Sensitiveness to group opinion, and receptivity to inspiration and courage from without may greatly contribute to any individual's moral development. It is hard to overstress the scope and value of this function of suggestibility. When we consider the formative influence of love in human behavior and the development of personality, the insight of the Greeks which led them to call love divine wins our approval. Yet it is doubtful whether love has exercised a greater influence than suggestibility in developing the race of man to its present position. Suggestibility is the avenue by which the collective force of the group is brought to bear upon the individual, which enables him to transcend the narrow limitations of his personality and to bring his conduct at some new point more in accord with the ennobling ideals of the group. No man acts solely in response to motives originated by himself; the determinants of his behavior do not all spring from within him. It is because man is gregarious, and therefore responsive to suggestion, that he can draw from the group courage and strength to fight against those impulses that are concerned solely with the ease and pleasure of the individual.

Thus suggestibility is one of the very tap roots of the religious life. Through suggestion a man can be lifted to heights of moral grandeur and inspired to make sacrifices that would be beyond his desire or power as an insulated individual. It is in obedience to the collective will as embodied in the customs and ideals of the group that he can forget self and act for the public good. Suggestibility, therefore, far from being necessarily an element of weakness may be an element of strength by which men receive from without new inspiration and courage.

SUMMARY. In this chapter a brief discussion has been

given of the traits of mind most significant for the study of the religious life. It began with a review of the instincts, which were defined as innate interests or purposes of man. We then showed how instincts take definite shape in the form of habits and organized sentiments. Conflicts between instincts, it was shown, inevitably arise in the process of deciding which shall be given right of way in the practical affairs of daily life. Various methods of dealing with these conflicts were pointed out. The method to which most attention was given was that of repression, the side-tracking of the set of interests on which a veto has been passed into the unconscious. This led the way to a description of the regions of the unconscious, and a short account of how multiple personalities may arise from a coalescence of the elements repressed. Following this outline of its content and organization mention was made of the capacity of mind to project its states into the external world. Note was taken of its tendency also to pass moral judgments and of its feeling of obligation to make its conduct correspond. Finally an account was given of how the mind may be affected by the presence and opinions of others and the ways that suggestion may open the door to both good and evil outside influences.

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Chapter III

DEFINITION OF RELIGION

Purpose of a Definition. The purpose of a definition is either: (1) To fix upon a meaning of a concept so that it will be used by all parties in the same sense; or (2) To express in definite and explicit terms the meaning which a concept by common consent implicitly possesses. No step of advance to new knowledge is taken by defining a term; rather a summary and clear statement of existing knowledge is the aim. Accordingly the definition we seek should render clear and concise the knowledge we possess of the meaning of religion.

We speak of the various religions of the world—Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, and the religions of primitive peoples. These all must possess some elements or characteristics in common which cause us to speak of them as religions. Our task is to discover these; for we may justly assume that the universal elements are essential to our definition.

It is generally agreed that all peoples are religious. The necessity therefore is laid on us of making our definition of religion broad enough to include some of the activities and attitudes of people with the minimum of religion. That condition exposes us to the danger of obliterating the distinction between religious and other activities. More concretely, it means that care must be taken not to confuse religion with magic, at one end of the cultural scale, or with ethical culture at the other.

Universal Characteristics of Religion. The

first part of the task of defining religion must be an inquiry into those aspects of religious behavior that are common to all religions. For convenience that study will be divided into three parts: (1) The objective; (2) The subjective; and (3) The sociological aspects. These classes are not to be thought of as operating independently of each other, but rather as correlated points of view from which the study of religion may be pursued.

Objective Characteristics of Religion. The objective characteristics of religion can be divided into two groups: (1) Cult practices, such as sacrifice, asceticism, prayer, and forms of worship; and (2) Institutional organizations.

Cult practices and forms of organization differ greatly. For instance, one religion will make much of asceticism; in another it may not be practiced at all. Prayer may be all-important in one and lacking in another. Yet no religion is lacking in a body of cult practices. And so it is in the matter of religious organization. The organized institutions of the various branches of Christianity differ greatly. If we consider religions generally from the standpoint of organization the diversity will be found even greater. Compare the organization of the religion of ancient Greece with that of the Hebrews; or the organization of the Roman Catholic Church today with that of the religion of the Arunta of Australia. The point to be emphasized is that religion never remains unorganized and left to the whims of the individual or to chance.[1]

At the minimum we can say regarding the objective characteristics of religion: *All religions possess a body of cult practices and some forms of organized life.*

[1] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 43-47.

Subjective Characteristics of Religion. The subjective characteristics of religion may be conveniently considered under three heads: (1) The cognitive phase, expressing itself in beliefs, faith, and general understanding; (2) The affective phase, expressing itself in aspiration, sentiment and emotion; and (3) The conative phase, expressing itself in purpose and action.

Is there anything in the beliefs, understanding, or interpretations of reality that is common to all religions? The great diversity of religious ideas and beliefs shown by the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, the Christian of the first century, the Christian of today, and the primitive peoples of the world upon careful examination reveals beneath the diversity the common belief that nature in the last analysis and viewed as a whole, is moral. It is true that this moral order of nature is conceived differently by each. In one religion the moral order of the universe is made to depend on the backing of many gods; in another on a single divine will; and in still another on no god at all.[2] The content of the moral order may be different in each of them. Yet in each reality is pictured as moral.

Proof that belief in a moral order of the universe is common to all religions may be shown by reference to the attitude on the subject of a few religions otherwise differing greatly. The primitive man of Australia subscribes to this belief, though he has no clearly formed idea of gods and his belief to be sure is not consciously formulated as here stated. But how else are we to account for his vague fears that something terrible will happen if the mores of the group are violated? His obtaining proper possession of the strange, mysterious element, *mana*,[3] with which nature is filled, in some way

[2] *Ibid.*, 29-35.

[3] W. K. Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion*, 15.

depends on living in strict accord with the mores of the group. Nature he is sure is vigilantly interested in the behavior of man. If all its members behave according to the group mores, all will be well. Otherwise something terrible will happen.

It is much the same with the Buddhist. While the orthodox Buddhist has no god, nonetheless he believes in the moral order of the universe which for him is represented or embodied in the law of Karma. Unless he rises above desire and passion as a detached Arahat or saint, there lie in store for him endless reincarnations back into this miserable world of illusion. If he can succeed in rising above desire, the happiness of Nirvana awaits him.[4] Salvation hinges on long sustained, individual effort but in so far as nature does not bring to naught the purpose of those who thus live virtuously, it is moral.

That religions which embody clearly formed ideas of personal gods contain a belief in the moral order of the universe is obvious. The gods stand back of it. Belief in or recognition of the moral order of nature may precede the belief in gods,[5] but when gods do come, one of the first duties entrusted to them is to safeguard and administer the moral order of nature as understood by their worshipers. The gods reward virtue and punish sin. They add their demand to the demand of the tribe for the observance of certain practices, and if the demand is met all is well with the tribe; if not, punishment results.

The psychological explanation of this universal belief in the moral order of the universe is clear. Every individual who acts in conformity with the moral ideas of his group, i. e. meets the demands that his society im-

[4] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, 30.

[5] F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy,* Chapter 1.

poses upon him, feels at peace within himself. Its approval makes him a member of respectable society in good standing. On the other hand, he who violates the mores of his group experiences the heavy hand of its disapproval and feels cut off, isolated, and depressed.[6] Belief in the moral order rests then on a real objective basis. Whether its creation and enforcement is the work of society only is a question we need not consider for the moment. Even that makes the moral order of nature something external to the individual, the operation of which is experienced too often for its existence to be denied. Religion everywhere makes this belief a central part of its world-view.

Sacred objects are a second thing common to all religions. The religious-minded divide their world of experience into sacred and secular halves.[7] The sacred half contains the objects that are taboo and the values that are not to be questioned. Sacred value may attach to objects such as symbols or animals; or to ideals, beliefs, social programs, etc. A symbol or an animal that is sacred is to be treated with ritual respect. It is frequently guarded from ceremonial defilement by elaborate measures. The command given to Moses to remove his shoes because he stood on holy ground illustrates what is meant by the protection of the sacred from defilement. The precautions which the Australian observes in killing a totem animal, are as much signs of deference to the value of the sacred as our attitude toward the Bible or the dead.

Ideals, beliefs, and social programs which have come to be regarded as sacred receive much the same veneration.

[6] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, Chapter VII, Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.*

[7] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, 37.

Devotion to truth at least in the world of scholarship is a sacred ideal, the value and worth of which are not to be questioned. Democracy, equality, and fraternity seem also to be ideals for many modern men, so sacred that they serve as a standard of value for all other ideals.

Objects, ideals, and beliefs so sacred that they must not be questioned impart order and stability to the world of thought of their devotees. If the Australian should take a different attitude toward the objects regarded by him as sacred, his world would be turned upside down. Just so among us is the Bible regarded by many. They feel that if the authority of the Bible were destroyed moral and social, as well as religious chaos, would be the result. Hence, aspersions upon its authority must not be allowed to go unrebuked. Social attitudes so deeply valued that it is felt that they are necessary for the maintenance of social order are based upon group convictions highly charged with emotion.[8] These beliefs are points of reference by which the order of the universe in question is sustained.

Included in the affective phase of religion which expresses itself in aspiration, sentiment, and emotion are fear, wonder, awe, and usually reverence. The importance of any one of these elements varies greatly in different religions. Fear, for instance, played a much greater rôle in Christianity a generation ago than it does today. In the religions which offered propitiatory sacrifices to appease the wrath of the gods fear often so predominated as to exclude love of the gods altogether. Reverence, therefore, cannot be regarded as an attitude common to all religions, for respect and affection as well

[8] Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*, 50.

as fear seem to be essential elements in reverence.[9] But in general we can say that the emotions of fear, wonder, awe, and the beginnings of reverence are common to all religions. Perhaps one can go further and say that their tendency is to blend into the attitude of piety, the characteristic form of religious behavior. Piety refuses to treat the great things of life flippantly. It stands in silent awe in the presence of the sacred mysteries.

Religion on its affective side is also commonly optimistic. Perhaps the nearest approach to an exception in the way of a pessimistic view is Buddhism with its doctrine that this life is an evil from which the wise wish to escape. Yet Buddhism offers a way out from the chain of reincarnations, and blessed rest in Nirvana.[10]

Another characteristic of religion on its affective side is that of increased personal well-being. The man who has performed his religious duties, and been true to his ideals, has a heightened sense of inward satisfaction and of increased well-being. He reaps here, as in all cases of acts that are in conformity to group ideals, or in response to the promptings of one's higher self. Such acts ennoble and elevate; they fill the individual with new appreciation of the significance and potential worth of personality.

This heightened sense of inward satisfaction and of increased well-being may be engendered in another way. It may be due to the conviction that one has escaped from the dilemmas of moral responsibility. Nothing is more irksome to man than moral ambiguity and uncertainty. Hence he makes almost frantic efforts to escape from it. If he can only find once for all a comprehensive guiding moral principle that will solve his ethical problems a great

[9] McDougall, *Social Psychology,* 136.

[10] Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion,* 93.

burden is lifted from his shoulders. Such a man is willing to act and suffer for his acts provided he can be sure of what is required of him. Satisfy him that his gods demand thus and so of him and you free him from the torment of divided counsels. Hence his heightened satisfaction following in the wake of acting in response to divine commands. The responsibility for truth of insight is transferred to the gods. To feel that the gods are directing his present course of behavior adds to life a sense of new worth and greater significance and meaning.

Through renunciation and submission religion provides still another way of escaping inward turmoil and of attaining peace. Such a man is compensated for losing his life in renunciation by finding it restored to him freed of interior tumult. The person who has made up his mind to give up everything in order to serve the Master and the cause which he has chosen has put his life in the hands of God and hereby driven the fear and uncertainty that hath torment out of it for good.

The characteristics then more or less common to the affective phase of all religions are fear, wonder, awe, reverence, piety, optimism, an enhanced sense of personal well-being and of restored peace and contentment.

Religion in its conative phase expresses itself in purpose and action. All religions may be regarded as a means of reënforcing the will toward a richer and fuller life. The assembling of people for the expression of their common interest in a more satisfying life cannot fail to strengthen the hold of that purpose upon its members. An excellent illustration of this principle is found in patriotic mass meetings.

The purposes and courses of action which the will may take up vary greatly, of course. In a group where constant struggle goes on to obtain the bare necessities of life

the group will concentrates its energies on this objective. In groups where material existence is fairly well assured, the energies left over are directed toward making that existence more desirable still. In the pursuit of its own betterment the group may seek to conquer its neighbors; or it may spend its strength in improving the morals of its own life. Or it may be concerned almost wholly with maintaining right relations with its gods. But whatever the direction the group will may take, its strengthening in every case is the object sought by the observance of religious practices. It is not the office of religion to direct the will aright. Religion is not essentially an agency for discovering the right; to reënforce devotion to what the group will has settled on as right is its great task.

Religion in its conative phase also serves to socialize the will. The deeply religious modern person plans his conduct in the light of what he understands to be the highest ethical principles. He is a socialized being. He embraces as his own the needs and interests on which his group has put the stamp of its approval. Religion in general seeks to foster this allegiance. It aims to be of service in this work of impressing upon the individual the socially approved ideals of the age. These ideals may or may not make for social welfare. Nonetheless they hold the reins if they are approved by the group will of the age.[11]

Religion, in this work of impressing the group values on the individual promotes the cause of his inner peace and strength. The greatest source of conflict within the personality is the civil war carried on between egoistic and altruistic desires. To the extent that the individual can be induced to seek his personal satisfaction through

[11] *Cf.* Summer, *Selected Essays,* "Religion and the Mores."

social interests he achieves a unified will. Hence we may say that religion as it expresses itself in purpose and action, both socializes and strengthens the will.

Religion from the Sociological Point of View. Religion appears from the point of view of sociology as an important aid in solidifying a disorganized company into a true group. If society is to retain the inner peace and solidarity that is desirable it must in some way make the desires and purposes of the individual coincide with the needs and purposes of the group as a whole. Religion may be regarded as one set of ways and means for bringing about this result. How it does this may be clearly seen in the use of religion to protect the food supply in a society which is constantly threatened with want. In such a society personal freedom cannot be allowed to endanger the supply of food. Society may proceed to prevent this if necessary by physical restraint, but it usually brings the individual voluntarily into line through its religious concepts and practices. The desire to enter into the full life of adult men appeals to all the young. Sacred mysteries are made a part of adult life and initiation is a privilege for which one must give proof that he is worthy before he is admitted. This proof consists in the strict observance of all the interdicts of the group, many of which have to do with protecting the food supply. These taboos are then impressed on the mind of the neophyte still more indelibly by elaborate ceremonies which intensify the sacred character of the totem animals. Such ceremonies and interdicts train the individual to act in conformity to social need rather than in response to personal appetite and egoistic desires.[12]

At higher cultural levels we find society making a

[12] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, 128-133, 333-335.

similar use of religion as a bulwark for the social virtues deemed necessary for the welfare of the group such as honor, truth, sobriety, fortitude, chastity, and love. The technique of impressing these upon the mind of the young initiate as in primitive societies consists of cult practices, such as prayer, the sermon, and baptism.

It follows from the above description of religion that it is a great conservative social force. If the great task set it is to impress what is regarded as good on all the members of the group, it naturally, then, will not be found in the front of moral progress. That is not its office. Its function is to conserve past gains, and perhaps to serve as a balance against forces making for too rapid change.

Summary and Definition. From the foregoing account the essential elements required to define religion, may be listed as follows: (1) Cult practices and forms of organized life; (2) Sacred objects and belief in a moral order, (3) Characteristic emotions such as awe, piety, optimism, and an enhanced sense of personal well-being; (4) A factor in impressing upon the mind of the initiate socially approved ideals.

We therefore formulate the following definition: Religion is an organized body of cult practices, based on the conviction that nature is moral, which are designed to bring the individual into proper relations with nature so conceived, and to induce him to accept the socially approved values of his group by setting them apart as sacred and investing them with such emotional accompaniments as submission, awe, piety, optimism and an enhanced sense of personal well-being and restored peace and contentment.

Religion and Magic. Does the foregoing definition serve to distinguish religion from magic, which, as has been pointed out, a satisfactory definition of religion should do?

If we recognize that the nature of distinctions in social practices must frequently be found in differences of interests and tendencies, the definition advance, it is thought, will meet this requirement admirably. In the first place, religion tends to seek social values, whereas magic tends to be morally indifferent. We cannot say that religion is never used for anti-social purposes. When one prays God to punish his personal enemy or to give him strength to do so, or when an evangelist prays God either to take his daughter unto himself or to send her in penitence to his revival services,[13] and the congregation approves, the evangelist and congregation are religious but nonetheless anti-social.[14] On the other hand, magic may be used for social purposes. When the peasants of Europe tried to produce rain by imitating thunder, lightning, and the shower, or when they tried to make the land fertile by fire,[15] or when the Chinese abuse their deities in order to compel them to grant the needs of the group, they are not acting religiously though they are acting socially. We, therefore, cannot say that religion and magic are different in that one is social and the other anti-social. Sometimes magic is social and sometimes religion is anti-social. But we can say that the tendency of religion is toward the securing of socially approved values. We are shocked when religion is used otherwise. Magic, on the other hand, is morally indifferent. It may be employed by the group as a whole, or it may equally well be employed by the individual in his anti-social

[13] That an evangelist offered this prayer was reported in Wilson, North Carolina, in the summer of 1924.

[14] These acts are anti-social in the sense that the community as a whole in which they occurred doubtless disapproved, and also in the sense that they are destructive of social well-being.

[15] Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* one-volume edition, 63 and 617 ff.

tendencies. There is nothing in magic to restrain the individual from using it anti-socially. This difference is covered in the definition given above. Religion aims to secure the acceptance by the individual of the social point of view. It may or may not succeed. Magic makes no pretense. It is purely non-moral.

Another distinction between magic and religion is a difference of attitude toward the forces outside of man with which he is in contact. Religion seeks its ends through persuasion; magic through compulsion. Magic, according to Frazer, preceded religion. But when man found that he could not compel nature to do as he wished, he interpreted his failures as due to the counteracting magic of some unknown magician. He therefore began to implore the unknown magician not to interfere.[16] There are instances where religion and magic are blended. In Navarre it was once the custom in a long drought to take the image of St. Peter to a river. While some members of the group would pray to him for rain, others would demand that he be ducked. Here we have a mixture of magic and religion. Let us try both, they seem to say, and if one proves ineffective, the other may save the day. The same combination is found in the rain ceremonies in use in China, and among the Feloupes of Senigambia. Sometimes those who pray for rain perform at the same time ceremonies which are designed to help the god send rain.[17] The difference in attitude toward the forces that influence man, which is the second distinction between magic and religion, is also covered in the definition of religion given above. The affective states of submission and reverence are the opposite of

[16] *Ibid.*, 57 f.

[17] *Ibid.*, 15 *et passim.*

the self-assertiveness that characterizes magic. Religion acknowledges dependence; it seeks to win support. Magic claims power; it seeks to control nature.

A third distinction between religion and magic, which is a very clear cut one, is a difference in the terms on which it is thought that help from outside forces can be obtained. Religion is based on the belief that these terms are moral, and magic on the supposition that they are mechanical. The religious devotee acknowledges that his chances of getting what he wants depend upon putting himself in the proper relationship with these outside forces by practicing the virtues of his group or by performing the rites approved by his gods. For him the acquisition of benefits from the forces of nature beyond his control is thus morally or socially conditioned. In magic, nature is thought to act mechanically. For instance, if an article that was once in contact with the body of an enemy is maltreated, it is thought that the enemy is necessarily affected by it. Or it may be thought that dragging a harrow over a parched field and throwing it into the river will cause a good rain to wet the whole field. Or the stomach of an ox may be burned in order that the black smoke may induce the clouds to gather and cause rain.[18] In such operations there is no thought of a moral order in nature. These activities are based upon the assumption that, if man will perform a mimicry of a given act, nature will mechanically produce the same act on a larger scale.

SUMMARY. The definition offered above of religion draws a sharp dividing line between religion and magic by differentiating them in the three following ways: (1) Religion seeks to impress upon the individual social values; magic is morally indifferent. (2) Religion seeks

[18] These and numerous illustrations of the same sort can be found in Frazer's *The Golden Bough.*

to persuade nature; magic seeks to compel her. (3) Religion is founded upon the belief that the terms on which these outside forces will come to human aid are moral; magic, upon the supposition that they are mechanical.

Religion and Ethical Culture. Does this same definition of religion also serve to distinguish religion from ethical culture? The first great difference to be noted is that for religious bodies the moral order has a supernatural origin, while for ethical culture societies morals are of human origin. Religious groups use their own set of ways and means, i. e. their religious practices, to impress their ethical standards upon the individual. Ethical culture societies have to find a substitute for these religious practices and depend upon criticism or reflection to accomplish the same end.

Another great difference between religion and ethical culture is that religion finds the supernatural bond that joins a man to his duties an immensely steadying factor in his ethical success or failure. But ethical culture societies will have none of the supernatural and insist that theology, metaphysics, and theories regarding the nature of the universe be kept separated from ethics. These are only tendencies. Ideals of morality must rest ultimately upon metaphysical foundations as well as upon foundations in social human needs. Religion makes much use of the metaphysical foundations which ethical culture societies tend to ignore. These differences between religion and ethical culture are covered by that part of our definition which states that nature as well as man is moral. That definition is thus seen to be broad enough to include the social practices that are commonly called religious, and at the same time to distinguish religious practices from both magic and ethical culture.

Religion and Belief in Gods or Spirits. Some

writers include belief in gods or spirits in their definition of religion. This would limit its scope too narrowly, for there are religions which disclaim belief in gods or spirits. Orthodox Buddhism is the principal representative of this group. Belief in God, gods, or spirits therefore cannot be regarded as an indispensable element of religion.

Religion and Belief in Immortality. Other writers include belief in immortality in their definition of religion. Historically, this belief has been extremely widely disseminated. Religions are known, however, which believed in something perilously near to extinction. Early Old Testament religion believed in so shadowy a future existence that none looked forward to it with any delight. Hence, religion may not be so defined as to include belief in immortality.

Religion and Morality. Any Christian community receives a shock if a religiously prominent person commits a crime or does an immoral act. We are almost in danger of identifying religion and morality. A man can no longer be religious without being moral. This is a mistaken idea. For while religions in advanced contemporary societies usually emphasize the ethical and seek to bring about the sound moralization of the individual, this has not always been so. The Orphic religion of Greece may very properly be spoken of as a religion in which salvation was thought to depend wholly on the proper performance of the cult practices. Such a religion may properly be called non-moral. It did not concern itself in the least with problems of social relationships. Thugism in India makes murder and theft religious acts, and the Skoptsy[19] practices rites that no one would hesitate to call immoral.

[19] For brief description of these see Moses, *Pathological Aspects of Religious Life*, 36 and 16.

Non-moral and immoral religions are, however, exceptional. Nor do they assume great importance. Religions, however, more frequently cling to practices once permissible long after they have been outgrown and declared immoral by the more reflective members of the same group. The religious demand for human sacrifice, for instance, persisted long, long after it had lost caste with the moral leaders of group after group. After the rites of the Bacchanalia had been abandoned by the men at the top they were kept by a remnant of the old guard. Today sects exist among us which go on committing in their religious zeal acts which the best Christian opinion condemns. At times fanatics commit crimes in the name of religion.[20]

It is very important that we should not be misled into thinking that because a course of action or a social program has the endorsement of conspicuous leaders it is necessarily right. Many crimes and blunders have been committed in the name of religion. Consider for example the ruthless conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, or the Christianizing of the Saxons, the persecution of witches, the inquisition, the religious wars, or the attitude of the medieval Church toward medicine. Glaring mistakes like these should warn us against accepting blindly the pronouncements of religious leaders in our time. Both history and psychology[21] caution us that it is our duty to take all social programs offered under consideration and in the light of all the knowledge we can get come to a decision of our own in regard to them. We cannot escape this duty of reflection and the exercise of personal judg-

[20] For an excellent account of the relation of religion to morality see Hopkins, *Origin and Evolution of Religion,* chapter on "Religion and Ethics."

[21] *Cf.* Chapters XI, XII, and XIII below.

ments by invoking the authority of our religious leaders. Our highest moral obligation is to be intelligent.

Religion and Social Service. Today so much emphasis is placed on social service that there is danger we shall deny that a person is religious unless some form of active service is part of his religion. Were we to identify religion thus with social service, we would be compelled to say that the great hermits and ascetics of the Middle Ages, many of whom have been regarded as saints, were not religious. Contrariwise the life of meditation and contemplation has played a part hard to overestimate in the development of religion. No definition will stand therefore which so narrows the meaning of religion as to exclude the life of asceticism and of contemplation.

Moreover an interest in group welfare or in the preservation of group values is not ground enough to warrant calling a man or group religious. Ethical culture societies, governments, colleges and universities show this interest. All these labor for the good of society and to preserve social values, yet no one would claim that they are all religious. In order that we may call labor in this field religious, it is necessary that the ways and means employed be the ways and means devised by religion to assist in impressing upon the initiate the socially approved ideals of his age. These have been indicated in our definition.

The Non-Religious. We should now be able to distinguish the religious person from the non-religious. A belief that the universe as well as man is moral is probably the clearest line of demarcation between religious and non-religious people. It is hard to imagine how a cynic or a sneerer at human nature or nature in the large could be a religious person. Since the religious person believes

that the universe as well as man is moral, he cannot well be a mechanist or a pessimist. He is either an optimist or a meliorist. He is confident that reality possesses the characteristics that make the salvation of the human race possible.

Participation in cult practices also draws a line of demarcation between the religious and the non-religious. This does not mean that a person who prefers to carry on his religious devotions in private and not with the group is non-religious. It does mean, however, that the religious person is not unfaithful to the religious practices of his group as is the non-religious.[22] After an individual has acquired his religious ideals and practices in youth he may then withdraw from the group in order to practice them in solitude. Unless he remains faithful to them publicly or privately we should hesitate before saying that he is religious. Individuals do not make their own religion; they may modify it or add to it, but it is essentially an acquisition socially impressed upon them in the beginning. "Communion of the saints" is a necessary aspect of every high type of religion. This communion need not be in physical presence; it may be established through ideal contacts. But communion in some form is necessary.

SUMMARY. In attempting to define religion an inquiry made into its universal aspects revealed that the things common to all religions are: Belief that the universe as well as man is moral; objects to which sacred value is attached; organized cult practices; emotions in its affective phase of fear, awe, and reverence and attitudes of submission and optimism; efforts to foster the allegiance of the individual to the values approved by the group to which he belongs. On the basis of these facts a definition

[22] If the practices of the ascetics were otherwise we should probably think of them as "compulsion neuroses."

of religion was formulated and examined to see how well it would serve to distinguish religion from magic and ethical culture. Attention then was drawn to points of contact and division between this same definition and (a) belief in gods and spirits (b), belief in immortality (c), salvation by correct performance of cult practices, (d) social service, and (e) the non-religious.

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Part II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY

Chapter IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION

The religious conceptions of an adult are not the same as those of a child. Anyone who will examine his personal religious history will note that growing experience, deepening insight, and broadening interest have changed the religious conceptions and values which he held as a child. The religious conceptions of a mature civilized group are also different from those of a more primitive one; for groups and societies also grow in experience, depth of insight, and breadth of interest. And religious practices as a set of ways and means for impressing the ideal aspirations and social values of the group upon the individual must readjust themselves to the developing character of the advancing society. It is therefore a mistake for an individual or for society to attempt to cling to religious conceptions which have been outgrown. In the case of the individual this necessarily leads to periods of conflict, and storm and stress, with the result that his religious conceptions are cast aside altogether, or they lose their vigor through their loss of vital contact with his changed interests and real beliefs. Likewise, for society to cling to religious conceptions which either no longer reflect the group aspirations, or are out of harmony with the advancing knowledge of the age, isolates religion and by so doing cripples one of the group's greatest spiritualizing and moralizing forces. Religious conceptions should change, and normally do change, to meet the individual's or group's development.

Religious development, then, has to be studied from these two points of view, namely, that of the individual and that of culture. In a general way we may say that the religious development of the individual roughly parallels the cultural development of the group of which he is a member. The religious conceptions of a child, like those found in a primitive group, are poorly defined animistic conceptions strongly colored with fear. As the child's knowledge and understanding increase, as his interests and loves widen, and his appreciation of the beauty of nature and of human relationships deepens, his religious development normally keeps step and passes through the successive refinings that religion in its cultural developmen has passed through in its progress from primitive to more advanced levels. Only in enlightened cultures of the highest order do religious conceptions reach their highest and most spiritualized form.

THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION. The origin of religion is not a problem that can be solved by historical investigation. History cannot point to a culture in which there is no religion. For this reason students of the origin of religious practices are driven to construct theories to account as plausibly as possible for the origins of religion. The questions: Why is man religious? and what are the origins of religion? are questions for the psychologist rather than for the historian.

Science assumes uniformity of response on the part of man as far as his fundamental reactions to environment are concerned. Hence, if the psychologist can put his finger on certain universal situations and needs which are at the bottom of religious practices today, it would follow that these situations and needs very probably were original sources of man's religious behavior. Of course, full allowance must be made for the fact that religious

behavior is greatly colored and determined today by tradition. Yet tradition is not the sole explanation; situations arise in every life which call out religious responses, and these after all must be regarded as the fundamental reasons for the persistence of the tradition and not vice versa. Not all traditions persist; some pass away. None of them is self-perpetuating. In order to persist the human needs which they answer must also persist. Some of the practices which are disguised as traditional are in reality constantly recreated by the original human needs which they still serve. Hence, without denying that much of the religious life of every group may be in part traditional, we cannot go far wrong if we regard those things, which make for the continued acceptance of the tradition and which constantly revitalize it, as the sources of religious life. We shall therefore proceed with our study of the origin of religion psychologically, that is, seek to point out the conditions which make for religious phenomena now and compare results so reached with the reports of the students of primitive culture regarding the religious life of primitive peoples.

Religion an Outgrowth of Uncertainty. If we lived in a world where all events were predicatable and fully understood, one great source of the religious life would be absent. Such events as birth, sickness, death, famine and war, with their attendant uncertainties, force human beings to resort to the practices and hopes of religion. At such times the individual does all he can for himself, and yet he realizes that the outcome is not completly within his power to determine. The necessity thus felt of *doing something more* impels him to perform religious practices.

An examination of the religions in primitive groups confirms this statement. In the hand-to-mouth existence

of these groups religious thought and labor are almost wholly absorbed with such uncertainties as securing an adequate food supply, the protection of the group against aggression, dangers attending child-birth, and sickness. As soon as the element of uncertainty regarding the satisfaction of an interest is materially lessened that interest becomes a much less important stimulus of religious behavior. Thus we ourselves do not feel that our food supply is uncertain. Hence, securing food is no longer an interest which stimulates us to religious behavior. It is chiefly when the satisfaction of a need or interest is an object of uncertainty, and it is felt that it cannot be secured by the efforts of the unaided tribe, that it becomes an instigator of religious practices.[1]

Religion a Reaction to Natural Forces. The great powers of nature have greatly affected man at all cultural levels. In their presence man feels an almost irresistible tendency to personify them. Travelers report that as they watch the waters of Niagara they can hardly escape the conviction that those plunging cataracts are animated by some personal being. Professor James tells us that he reacted in this way once to an earthquake. He could not keep the feeling down that he was in the rough hands of a vicious will. If Professor James felt this way how much more intense must the feeling be in the minds of those who lack Professor James's scientific background! It should cause no one any surprise, therefore, to learn that a similar feeling is so intense in the minds of primitive people that they cast about for weapons to combat the storm as they would a wild beast or some personal enemy.

The tendency to personify nature and to treat with it

[1] For a clear statement of this position see Moore, *Birth and Growth of Religion*, 3-20.

accordingly is undoubtedly an important source of religion. In yet another way man's reactions to natural forces may have been an additional source of religion. We need not assume that men regarded the forces of nature as identical with "wills" or spirits in order to understand how they reached a decision that they should fight them as they would an enemy. Their response to these natural forces may be regarded as an expression of the urge to do something. It was the will to live which urged them to some form of activity when threatened by some powerful force of nature. They could not remain passive. How else should they act other than as they were accustomed to act toward all enemies. The need of justifying such spontaneous actions may well have led them to the personification of natural forces, and when this is once done these forces easily become objects of religious practices. Our knowledge of primitive religions confirms this view, for many religious practices, as well as rites of magic, seem to have arisen in this way.

Not only the destructive elements of nature but also its beauty and grandeur gave rise to its personification. Man in the presence of nature's massive, overwhelming beauty feels his insignificance and his dependence. He is awed by it. Now, according to McDougall, awe is usually induced by the presence of an impressive person, and we by habit therefore regard it as so aroused whenever we experience it. Hence, the awe inspired by its beauty and grandeur leads us to personify nature.[2] Likewise, the stately progress of the seasons may affect men similarly, and may thus give rise to religious phenomena. It is more than likely that the great god Dionysos arose

[2] McDougall, *Social Psychology,* 132-135. See also Müller, *Physical Basis of Religion,* for discussion of nature as source of religious behavior.

in this way. When the hard winters of Thrace had passed, and the people looked forward to months of warmth and freedom from cold and hunger, they felt rising within themselves a quickening of life and expressed their joy and elation in mad dances. Such exhilarated state required an explanation. What better explanation could be offered than that the spirit of spring had intoxicated them? And they would be inclined to add that no spirit deserves more to be worshiped than the one responsible for such bounty, elation, joy, and intensification of life.

Our reactions to nature are thus seen to be similar to our reactions toward our fellows. If nature is hostile we fight; if it impresses us with its grandeur and beauty we are awed; if it fills us with new joy we worship. Such reactions lead to the personification of nature, and thus give rise to religious behavior.

Religion a Product of Metaphysical Interests. While it is no doubt true that students of the origin of religion have in the past overemphasized the importance of metaphysical considerations, we are perhaps at present inclined to go to the other extreme and underrate their significances. We tend to become so wrapped up in our new knowledge of the influence of affective and emotional states on the development of belief that we are in danger of neglecting the fact that man is at least partly rational. Men today are led by their desire to understand things to believe in a god. This is true of men today everywhere. We, therefore, should hesitate to say that none of the indefinitely large number of primitive men had enough intellectual curiosity to ask questions regarding the source of things. Moreover, in saying that this metaphysical interest was probably present in primitive man we are not attributing to him anything more than we

find in our own children. How common it is for them to ask, Who made the world? Who made Mamma or Papa? Who made God? Questions such as these, expressing as they do interests of children, may very well have been asked by some primitive man.

Psychological Phenomena as a Source of Religion. The psychological phenomena which may have given rise to religious behavior may be divided into three groups: (1) Dreams, spells of fainting, and coma; feeling of the presence in the case of one absent, a presentiment of danger and death; (2) responsiveness to acts of bravery, heroism, devotion, and inspiration; (3) elation and satisfaction born of group approval, or of humiliation due to group disapproval.

In spite of our greater knowledge of the psychology of dreams they frequently make a profound impression upon us. So does an instance of a seeming visitation from an absent one. The less educated attach yet more significance to such events. Hence, the inference is warranted that extraordinary significance was attached to these experiences in primitive groups. How otherwise would the uninstructed savage account for such experiences than by believing that his double had taken a journey or that the double of someone else had made him a visit during his sleep; that the beloved one had actually returned; that some vicious spirit was near; or that in fainting, or coma, the spirit had left the body—in the case of death, not to return.[3] Out of such conceptions religious practices would almost inevitably arise.

Acts of bravery, heroism, and devotion constitute the second group of psychological phenomena that has undoubtedly contributed to religious conceptions. Such acts

[3] Spencer, *Sociology*, Parts I and VI.

arouse admiration; they convince us that human nature is good; that the universe is sound and that moral elements belong to the very core of reality. A good illustration is found in the reactions of those who survived the Titanic disaster. Some of the survivors reported that they were carried to heights of religious feeling never before attained and that the acts of sacrifice and unselfishness then witnessed brought them into the very presence of God. Without going through such an experience the reaction of the survivors can be partially understood, though in a much milder way, by noting our own reaction to a dramatic account of such experiences, or to acts of sacrifice, devotion, and loyalty described in great fiction.

That the feelings engendered by acts of this nature have played an important part in religious development is rendered certain by the interpretation primitive peoples give them today. Such acts, they explain, indicate that the actor is filled with more than the usual amount of an extra human element which anthropologists call *mana,* or that they are the work of some powerful ancestor embodied in the actor. The acts could not be performed by mere man unaided. They are esteemed to be beyond the limits of human power. Thus we find that such acts in primitive culture, as in our own, point man to a moral order superior to that displayed on the ordinary human level.

Likewise, the phenomena connected with inspiration are often interpreted in ways that make contributions to religious ideas. The man who has obtained some sudden insight feels as if someone has revealed that truth. A moment of inspiration, like an act of great bravery, must be due also to an excess of *mana* or to the agency of an ancestor temporarily embodied within the fortunate one's person. Such an individual is certain that this insight

was not the product of his efforts. Therefore it must have come, he feels, from another spirit or power like unto or superior to himself.

The response of elation to group approval or of depression at group disapproval forms the third group of psychological phenomena that may be cited as sources of religious life and development. Instances of the power of group approval to fill the individual with a sense of power greater than that which he usually possesses are to be found in emotionally swayed religious gatherings and in the frenzy of mobs or of an army in battle. The collective power of the group seems to enter its individual components in a way that causes them to feel a new capacity, courage, and enthusiasm. They all know that they are not animated solely by forces that spring from within themselves. Conversely it is equally true that physical or spiritual isolation is a source of depression.

Durkheim bases his account of the origin of religion on the above facts. When the small families of the primitive tribe, he tells us, get together from time to time they celebrate the occasion by dancing. As a result of engaging in this and other common activities, each individual somehow feels a new intensification of life. His usual limitations disappear, and in their place arise new feelings of power. The individual feels that he has been lifted up and ennobled.

A power that is able to create effects like these requires an explanation. The primitive man, according to Durkheim, attributes it to *mana*. But whence the *mana*? he asks next. Any object, animal, or person which may have attracted the attention of the group may be taken by him as the source. Primitive man is not as critical in tracing cause and effect as is civilized man. Hence, an origin which would appear to us a most far-fetched explanation

of the source of the *mana* may readily satisfy primitive man. But the source of the *mana,* no matter what it be, becomes a sacred object. Representations or images of the sacred object are made and in the future are always in evidence at gatherings of the tribe. In accordance with the law of suggestion, the emotions and feelings which were first ascribed to the object are later in reality caused by its sacred effigy.

The feelings of solidarity with one's fellows which cause the affective states just described need not depend on physical contact. Something of the collective power of the regiment may animate the soldier who defends its colors even though his fellows are not present. A member of a highly self-conscious group may be set on fire by the spirit of his group and act accordingly even though absent from them. And so it is with the individual who acts as he knows his group approves. The spirit of the group animates him. He feels something of the collective power of the group lifting him up and ennobling him.

On the other hand, the individual who has violated the moral ideals of his group experiences a feeling of isolation. He becomes depressed. The same agency that in the one case exalts him in the other crushes him. A power as great as this, Durkheim argues, may well be regarded as sacred. Thus group approval or disapproval became a direct cause of one of the great religious conceptions.[4]

SUMMARY. It is not possible to discover the origin of religious conceptions by methods of historical investigation. The most satisfactory procedure is to construct

[4] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* Book II, Chapter VII, and 119-127. See also King, *Development of Religion,* Chapter VII, for an account showing how spontaneous expression of emotion may give rise to religious behavior.

theories based upon our present knowledge of human nature, and to check them up by what is known of the simplest forms of religion. In this way we discover a number of experiences which can reasonably be regarded as sources of religious behavior and conceptions. These are: (1) Vital needs or necessities which are found to be beyond control like an adequate food supply; (2) Forces of nature which fill men with fear, reverence, or elation; (3) Metaphysical interests; (4) Various psychological phenomena, such as dreams, a sense of visitation from an absent one, and reaction to the death of beloved ones; responsiveness to acts of bravery and human devotion and to inspiration; and group approval and disapproval.

Origin no Test of Validity in Religion. Before proceeding to a study of the course of development taken by religion it may be well at this point to consider how far the validity of belief in God is affected by our knowledge of its primitive beginnings. It is a sound principle which declares that if men are to believe in God at all, that belief must have its roots in certain definite experiences. Locating these experiences, however, by no means determines the validity of the beliefs grown from them. A knowledge of the history and development of an artist may be helpful in understanding his compositions, but our judgment of their beauty is not determined by our views regarding his psychological background. Likewise, the validity we attach to judgments and beliefs should not be determined by our understanding of the psychological bases of the belief. Furthermore it is obvious that if man is to believe in God he must find within his own experience reasons for believing. The nature of these experiences changes with man's development from primitive to civilized conditions of group life. Experiences which may have had great weight

with primitive man may be allowed little weight by us. Judgment of the validity of a modern belief should not be based upon the experiences which led primitive man to believe. Validity is determined by the answers to such questions as these: What is the nature of the experiences which prompt men of our culture to believe? How much real force is there to the reasons now given in support of believing? Does the belief under discussion fit in with the rest of our system of beliefs and knowledge? Such considerations as these, and not inferences from the experiences which caused primitive man to believe must determine validity in the domain of religious belief.

THE COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT TAKEN BY RELIGION. Our exposition of the development of religion will confine itself for illustration to the Greek and Hebrew religions and their offspring, Christianity.

(1) *Greek Religious Conceptions.* Since Greek religion is a very complex subject space is wanting to do more than sketch the changes in its conceptions of God and the relation these bear to the changes that took place in the general culture of Greece.

The earliest form of Greek religion, like the religion of all primitive groups, was animated by fear. In this it reflected truly the state of culture that prevailed. The Greeks were subject to the same dangers as all primitive peoples. Danger of human violence, danger from wild animals, danger from drought or crop failure, danger from strange sicknesses and pestilence continually beset primitive man. Against such dangers he is almost helpless. He knows that he cannot effectively combat them. Under these conditions we should expect his religion to be primarily concerned with measures devised to insure the perpetuation of the tribe, and provide it with prolific herds and bountiful crops. And this is a true

description of early Greek religion. Its deities possessed the control over the food supply that they themselves lacked. That is why the gods for the most part were Chthonian or earth deities, and why the bull and the pig acquired a sacred status. Hidden in the same underground regions where the gods of fertility dwelt were also the ghosts, for whom many sacrifices were offered in the effort to purify those about to be reincarnated, and to placate those for whom there was to be no present release. The sacrifices in general were accordingly gloomy rites of riddance, designed either to free the community from the presence of inimical ghosts and spirits, or to persuade underworld deities to show favor. Ceremonies were performed in the spring to insure bountiful crops and prolific herds and at harvest time to remove the taboo from the new food supply. Many of these cults were associated with such goddesses of the earth as Demeter, and her daughter Persephone, and also with water nymphs like the Danaides, and avenging demons like the Harpies and Erinyes. All in all the early Greek had a very gloomy religion, the product of a hard environment and of gross superstitions.

Greek religion in its second period which is termed the Olympian religion, stands out in sharp contrast to its predecessor. It is the religion of the Aryan invaders of Greece. This Olympian religion never quite overcame the early Greek religion. The conquered masses of the original inhabitants clung tenaciously to their primitive religious conceptions and rites. They continued to practice them subject to partial modification by influences issuing from the cultural advance of the ruling class. The Olympian was the political religion supported by the upper classes and the urban populations rather than that of the Helot classes and the people of the districts.

The reason for the sharp contrast between the Olympian religion and the early Greek religion is plain. The Olympian religion was the product of better organized group life and was made by and for its upper or ruling classes. When an interlocking society arises, in which the individual is no longer dependent on the fertility of his own small plot of ground but in a poor year can draw upon a common food supply, the extra-human factors responsible for a good harvest cease to retain their religious importance. This was particularly true of the ruling class of Greece, who relied on slave labor to keep their lives free from such fear and hardships. To them, existence was rather an opportunity for love and adventure. Hence, the Olympian deities, since they were the deities of the rulers, instead of attending to such practical concerns as the fertility of the soil, or the safety and preservation of the group, occupied themselves with conquest, adventure, and love. Instead of fearing their gods, these Greeks fitted them out with the things they admired most. Hence, they feasted them, and sacrifices instead of being the gloomy rites they were in early Greek religion became festive occasions.

The reflective spirit of the Greeks, however, could not long be satisfied with the Olympian gods. They were too human, too prone to indulge in human foibles and vices. The need of a higher deity began to be felt and God soon came to be conceived as pure spirit, as reason immanent in things, as the moral law of the universe or as the Self-existent and Absolute. Reflections of this sort imperceptibly led the Greeks to the acceptance of monotheism, but a monotheism that always tended toward philosophical pantheism.

This third tendency found its full development in the pantheism of the Neo-Platonic school. To Philo and

Plotinus alike God is all. Everything that exists is but an emanation from God. Reality is, therefore, spiritual through and through. The true destiny of man is to be reabsorbed within the One or the Absolute.

> Only by contemplating the One is it possible for the individual to realize his true destiny. Man has in him a fragment of the Absolute, and through insight and spiritual contact, he becomes one with the Absolute. The individual passes through several stages in this ascent. The first step in this ascent is the practice of the social virtues. . . . The second step is the practice of purification. At this stage there is effected complete subjection of the flesh. A freedom from all thralldom to passion is attained. . . . The final step. . . is direct union with the One . . . . It is a spiritual contact in which we reach the fountain of being, and in this experience the soul is alone with the Alone. . . . In this experience all separate existences have vanished as being illusory, and all individual souls have merged into oneness with the Godhead.[5]

The foregoing three[6] chief stages of Greek religion in each case had their main features determined by the paramount interests and needs of the group at the time. The early religion was patterned upon the fears and

[5] Leighton, *Field of Philosophy,* 162-3.

[6] I have omitted an account of the Orphic religion, which may be regarded as constituting the third stage as far as the masses were concerned. It was something of a return to the first stage with some of the earlier harshness softened by the anthropomorphism of the Olympian gods. Its popularity was due in part to a growing self-consciousness and the breakdown of loyalty to the city state. Both these developments placed new emphasis on individual salvation and immortality, and the Orphic cults met these demands.

hardships of small agricultural communities; the Olympian upon the interests of a ruling and venturesome class; and Neo-Platonism upon the interests of philosophers and of an intelligent minority seeking a type of salvation void of any appeal to a less reflective age. This relation between social conditions and religion is characteristic of the course taken by religious development universally.

(2) *Hebrew Religious Conceptions.* Many scholars maintain that Hebrew religion in its earliest stage centered its attention upon inanimate objects of various kinds such as rivers, caves, stones, and mountains, which were considered sacred. In other words, it was polydaemonistic to begin with. There were jinns everywhere. The serpent was sacred, and so was the sheep; hence the image of the serpent raised by Moses and the rite of the Passover. The primitive elements are still discernible. But when the nomadic migrations were over and the tribes settled in Canaan and became an agricultural rather than a pastoral people, these new social conditions produced changes in religious practice. The bull then became the chief sacred animal.[7] We shall not dwell, however, upon these stages of Hebrew religion, but pass on to present the successive ideas of God set forth distinctly in the Old Testament.

As conceived by the early Hebrews God was a purely national god like the gods of adjacent nations. The Hebrews and He had entered into a covenant with each other. They agreed to worship Him, and He in turn agreed to aid them. He did not seem to expect worship from the non-Israelitish world. When the Syrian, Naaman, was cured of leprosy and wished to become a follower of Je-

[7] Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience,* 172 ff. and references.

hovah, he felt it necessary to take Jewish soil home with him on which to erect an altar. Jonah thought that by fleeing from Palestine he could escape the jurisdiction of Jehovah. Jehovah then, it is clear from these instances, was a national deity.

This God confined to one locality is very human in His attitudes and acts. He hates Esau, but loves Jacob. He molds man as a sculptor might mold his clay and then breathes into him His own vivifying breath. He walks in the Garden of Eden. He is jealous. He is displeased that the sons of God have married women, because He does not want His spirit to enter human beings. The people forget Him, wherefore God destroys them in a flood. He has a poor memory. After the flood He puts the rainbow in the heaven to serve Him as a reminder of His promise to Noah not to send another deluge. When the people attempt to build a tower to heaven, to confound them He makes them speak different languages. His means of knowledge is not different from ours. He investigates a report in regard to Sodom which He has heard. He eats with Abraham under a tree. In order to show His power He hardens Pharaoh's heart. He is a dangerous force that may kill by mere contact. Uzzah drops dead from touching the Ark of the Lord. Moses ropes Sinai off to prevent the people from crowding too close to God's person and thus provoking His anger. Jehovah is also capricious. His spirit enters Samson, and he becomes powerful; it enters Othniel, and he becomes a judge of Israel; it enters Saul and he falls in a mad frenzy. He delights in sacrifices. The one offered by Noah so pleases Him that He agrees not to send another flood. When Saul is angry with David, David

says, "If it is Jehovah who has stirred you up against me, let Him smell an offering.[8]

The above examples illustrate one conception of God found in the Old Testament. But the same Old Testament contains a second conception; namely, the one advanced by the great prophets of a later period. They proclaim an ethical deity of the highest type who is free of the human limitations of the earlier Old Testament God. His jealousy, capriciousness, His non-moral attributes are gone and in their place is an intense passion for righteousness, and a desire that all men shall become righteous and thus learn to know Him. He no longer cares for sacrifices, but demands inner purity of heart as the condition of His favor. He is no longer invoked as an ally in war. He is the God of all peoples and desires above all things that they shall live righteously. He becomes a great Heavenly Father to be loved rather than to be feared.

These two conceptions of God stand out clearly in the Old Testament. What brought about this striking transformation? There were three chief causes: (1) The higher moral insight and individual initiative of the prophets; (2) Economic changes; and (3) Political changes.

(a) *The Contribution of the Prophets to the Development of the Hebrew Idea of God.* The prophets were men who had spent many private hours in the pursuit of religion, wherein they learned how to look deep into the spiritual nature of things and impart to their message the accent of the true and the genuine. They played a part in Hebrew religion similar to the one played by the

[8] These instances are taken from the collection of Patton as given in his *Religion in the Thought of Today,* 60 ff. The reader will find his discussion of the development of Hebrew religion of great value.

philosophers and tragedians in Greek religion. It would not be easy to overestimate their influence in giving a true account of the development of Hebrew religion. This statement is not contradicted by a free admission that like all other men they were creatures of their age, and that their thought was largely determined by social conditions. Even more important is it to remember that the acceptance of their message was also to a great extent determined by social conditions.

(b) *Economic Changes.* Economic changes had a direct influence on the course of development followed by the religion of the Hebrews. When the nomadic tribes left the desert and settled in Canaan they moved into a country much richer in natural resources than that to which they had been accustomed. They also found many new deities, and as was the habit of the times they naturally tended to adopt these deities along with the land. After the kingdom had been set up a luxurious court soon sprang into existence, which insisted upon an elaborate ritualism in religion. To support this new order of things heavy taxes were imposed upon the people, which constituted a real hardship.

One of the most natural reactions to the evils of a corrupt age is a plea for a return to the older and simpler ways of an idealized past. This was what the great prophets advised. They insisted that if the country would free itself from the suffering and hardships imposed by the luxurious life and ritualistic religion of the court, it must return to the older religious simplicity of the desert. It must observe the covenant with the Lord[9] and must recognize that God cares nothing for costly animal sacri-

[9] For an account of the influence of the covenant on the moral and religious development of Hebrews see Barton, *Religion of Israel,* Chapter III.

fices, but is delighted rather by the observance of just relationships between men. He much prefers righteousness to expensive offerings.

This protest against the corruption of the court and its ritualistic religion was accompanied by a plea to return to the simple religion of the fathers. We should not make the mistake of imagining, however, that the prophets advocated a return to the crude religion and social conditions of the desert; like all great religious reformers they were in reality making a plea for religion as they had come to think it should be. They may have proclaimed that what they advocated was the religion of their fathers. We now know that it was not. Nonetheless the appeal to the old is always an effective one, and that appeal helped to spiritualize the religion of the Hebrews. Instead of taking it back to the old, however, the prophets carried it forward to a new level.

(c) *Political Changes.* The political misfortunes of the Hebrews materially aided the prophets in the task to which they had set their hands. In the face of their defeats in war, the old conception of God as an ally had to be subjected to re-examination. Why did God allow His enemies to triumph? Was it because He was unable to prevent it? Or was it because He wished to punish the Hebrews for neglecting Him so badly? There could be no doubt about the right answer in the intensely religious souls of the prophets. God was using the other nations of the world as His agents to recall the Hebrews to a life of purity. Instead of the political disasters of the Hebrews causing them to look upon God as less powerful, it led them to extend His power and make it all-inclusive. He became for them the God of all peoples with the whole historical process under His control.

Not only did the political misfortunes of the Hebrews

lead the prophets to extend the dominion of the God of Palestine over all lands, but it also changed their concepceptions of his ethical character. God was not a monarch and he no longer needed a political state for His glory. God was the Holy One. His kingdom became a kingdom of righteousness and only those nations and individuals who enthroned righteousness in their hearts might hope to win his favor. Thus Micah writes:

> Wherewithal shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.[10]

(3) *Christian Religious Conceptions.* The history of Christianity shows its religious conceptions undergoing a course of development analogous to that which took place in the Greek and Hebrew religions. At first the religious ideas of the early Christian community were far from homogeneous. Greek and Hebrew influences struggled therein for mastery. The Greek influence lay in the direction of an immanent and pantheistic God; the Hebraic toward a God transcendent and personal—God the Father. The Church gave its support to the Hebraic conception, and when speculative interest waned in the Ancient World, the Church succeeded in fastening a thoroughgoing anthropomorphism on the Christian world. Dante's is the classic expression of this view. In the Middle Ages a few speculative philosophers rejected this anthropomorphic

[10] Quoted from Patton, *Religion in the Thought of Today*, 63.

conception of God and tended toward pantheism, but in general the God of the times was a being made by man in his own image. His demand upon men above all things else was thought to be for right beliefs.

The dawn of modern philosophy in Europe inaugurated movements which have led to fundamental changes in prior Christian conceptions of God. The Copernican revolution in astronomy rendered it hard to assign to God a local habitation. Man was impressed with the greatness of the universe as never before. The meaning of the majesty and omnipresence of God acquired new content. Once regard God as present everywhere, it is hard to cling to the view that He is an analogue of man. Again, the occurrence of the Darwinian revolution in biology profoundly influenced Christian conceptions of God. Formerly He was a manufacturer who had made the world in *one* creative act, wound it up, and left it to run with as little interference as possible. But when modern thought accepted the principle of evolution it had to dismiss this conception. It now became necessary to conceive of Him as still laboring at His uncompleted creative work in terms of evolution.

Additions to our knowledge of psychology are having important influences upon formerly acceptable accounts of religious experience. Conversion, and also the strength and inspiration which come from prayer and meditation, were once regarded as the utterly mysterious gifts of a transcendent God. Since strictly law-abiding processes have been discovered in connection with these experiences it is hard to view them in the old way. Insight into the psychology of religious phenomena, inclines modern man to look upon God as an operating presence *in* these experiences. God is conceived to be not a person outside of us, who from time to time influences us;

rather God is conceived to be everywhere present and to operate in all things. His most perfect manifestations come to bloom in the aspirations of man.

Not only have these advances in science led to these modifications of our conception of God, but philosophical speculations have had the same influence. Ever since Descartes formulated so clearly the difficulties of conceiving how a physical body can be affected by a non-physical force modern thought has striven for a higher unity which will bridge the chasm implied in this metaphysical dualism. Speculative thinking of this sort has led many to conceive of God as the Absolute, the All-One, who reveals himself in innumerable ways. Modern thought, or much of it, just as does Greek thought, ends in pantheism.

A very active interest in parting right from wrong in social relationships has also exercised an important influence upon modern conceptions of God. The primary demand of God upon men is no longer represented to be an insistence that He be correctly conceived. He is now thought of as primarily interested in right conduct.

SUMMARY. Both in the group and in the individual life religious development is the law. Hence investigation and close study of the course of religious development both group and individual is intimately germane to our own subject. The present chapter chiefly interested itself in the religious development of the group. Attention was first called to the fact that the origin of religion is not a problem that can be solved by historians. We then pointed out some of the basic conditions—reactions to uncertainty and natural forces, metaphysical interest, and psychological phenomena—which gave rise to religious beliefs and practices in the first instance, and then illustrated the course of development undergone in these

beliefs by a brief sketch of the Greek, Hebrew, and Christian religions. In the two following chapters we shall continue this discussion of the development of religion by a study of the changes in the belief in God and the belief in immortality.

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Chapter V

BELIEF IN GOD

The purpose of this study of the belief in God is to point out first how the belief arose and why it continues to find credence. Secondly we shall attempt to show how the belief functions, i. e. affects the life of the believer. Conceptions of God, however, differ radically, since some hold God to be a person while others believe Him to be impersonal. That will make it necessary to set forth first how belief in a personal God functions, and then how belief in an impersonal substitute affects the life of the believer.

Belief in God's Existence. To the question, Does God exist? may be given two distinct meanings. It may mean, Is there a being that corresponds to our *conception* of God? In this sense the question is not, Is there a God? It is concerned merely with the truth of our particular conception of God. Or the question may mean, Would the nature of reality if adequately known reveal characteristics which may properly be judged divine? A little reflection will show that the second meaning is the one we should attach to the question.

When we consider the diverse conceptions which men have held of God it is obvious that they cannot all be correct. Children sometimes conceive God to be a long-bearded personage peeping over a high desk to note and write all our acts in a large ledger. By others He is still regarded as an august oriental potentate. Yet others, while they look upon Him as indescribable as far as par-

ticulars are concerned nonetheless believe Him to be a real personality who created the universe. Then again He is regarded as a spiritual force animating the universe and unfolding itself in an evolutionary process. For these believers He is a power other than man making for righteousness, which reaches highest expression in the good human life. The mystic dreams of Him as the totality of being, or the Absolute, to which all individual beings belong like acorns to the oak or ideas to the mind. All of these conceptions cannot be true. It is no more true, however, that the existence of God stands or falls with the fate of any given conception of Him. The question of God's existence narrows itself down to this issue, Would the nature of reality provided it could be adequately known reveal to us characteristics which may be judged divine?

To determine the answer to this question of God's existence so understood calls for a critical examination of the nature of reality and the commonly accepted meaning of the divine. Provided we do not allow ourselves to become bewildered over the infinite diversity of the current conceptions of God, beneath all this diversity a common ground will be noted, namely, a teleological and spiritualistic interpretation of reality. Every conception of God holds that there is a moral order and every attempted definition of Him implies that nature is purposive. All views of Him share the conviction that reality is such as to warrant the reverence and worship of man, whether this constitution of reality is thought to have been conferred upon it by a personality or not. In sharp contrast to this view of reality is the materialistic conception which declares that matter and motion exhaust the whole meaning of reality and that no characteristics other than these mechanical properties belong to

it. Purpose, values, and ideals are empty shells on this view.

It follows, therefore, that in studying the question of God's existence, we should look for purpose, order, value, reason, and will. In other words we should ask, Is the materialistic or mechanistic view of reality true? A teleological view of reality is very congenial to belief in God. Yet the conception of God which thus results from the rejection of materialism is too broad to be satisfying to many religious people. God for them must be conceived as a personality and as transcendent to our universe. The conceptions of God held by religious people may therefore be divided into two main groups: (1) Those who look upon God as a transcendent personality; and (2) Those who conceive of Him as impersonal and immanent, that is, as having His existence in and through the universe. In general philosophy has favored the latter conception; the religious consciousness has in most cases preferred the former.

Roads to Belief in God. The previous chapter dealt with the sources from which belief in God originally sprang. Our discussion of the beliefs of primitive man pointed out the relations between his belief in God and his general conceptions and knowledge of reality. The conclusion drawn was that it is not sufficient to treat the belief in God as an outgrowth of affective and emotional experiences, or of the "will to believe." The belief in God of primitive man was more or less affected by his metaphysical views regarding reality. Our task now is to indicate the reasons why men in our cultural group believe in God, and we should not expect reasons of a different order. Just as the belief of primitive man in God was in response both to affective experiences and metaphysical needs, so is the belief of the modern man. If it was

found to be important to state how wrestling with metaphysical difficulties led the primitive man to believe, it is of equal importance to indicate the metaphysical problems which lead the modern man to believe.

(1) *Suggestion as a Cause of Belief.* Social suggestion is one of the most pervasive of the varied causes that make for belief in God. The normal reaction of an individual to the beliefs of his group is one of acceptance. It could not well be otherwise. Told from childhood upward that a certain thing is true, it never occurs to nine men out of ten to refuse assent. Why should the man on the street question the ideas current regarding astronomy or evolution? What can anyone who has never thought anything through for himself do but always accept on authority or suggestion the views that he holds? And is it not to a certain degree desirable that we all should so act? Why be surprised then that large numbers of people when asked answer that social suggestion was the main stimulus to belief in God for them?[1]

(2) *Emotional and Affective Experience as a Stimulus to Belief in God.* That emotional and affective experiences are a very common source of belief in God is generally recognized by psychologists. As the result of a questionnaire Pratt reported that thirty-five percent of his correspondents accounted for their belief largely by such experiences as the following: They had felt or sensed the presence of God, or the immediate certainty had taken possession of them that God had revealed Himself to them. Others would say that they had been so moved on certain occasions by the grandeur of nature that they could not help but believe. Still others would report that some episode of nobility or the springtime

[1] See Pratt, *Psychology of the Religious Consciousness,* Chapter XX.

joy of animate nature threw them into a state of exhilaration in which they came to know that there is a God. All these forms of experience illustrate how an emotional or affective state may produce an overpowering conviction that God simply must be.

(3) *Ethical Reflection as a Road to Belief.* Human nature at times behaves in a way that moves men to exclaim: "There is a God; the divine in man is proof of it." At other times the injustice prevailing in human relations, and the brutality of man to man, may give rise to the conviction that there must be a God. It is then held that there must be a God to right the wrongs of the weak and the innocent. Moreover, it seems so obvious that the life of virtue is not always the life of greatest happiness, and as virtue must be rewarded there must be a God who will reward the virtuous and punish the wicked.

(4) *Metaphysical Arguments as a Road to Belief.* In the study referred to above Pratt states that thirty percent of his correspondents came to believe largely as a result of considerations that appealed to their reason. Belief made the universe more intelligible, they declare, in three ways: (a) It supplies the least inadequate answer to the problems raised by the question of the origin of reality; (b) It makes more intelligible the nature of our universe; and (c) It furnishes the best explanation of the wholesome consequences of believing.

(a) The problem regarding the origin of reality is sometimes met by postulating a first cause. Observation makes it plain that one phenomenon gives rise to another, and so on in an endless chain as far as we can perceive. Ask what caused event "A," and the answer is event "B," which was caused by "C," and so on. But this regress cannot be carried back forever. We do not have to know

exactly how long that chain of sequences is to hazard the speculation that as nothing shows itself to be self-starting the ultimate source of all things is an uncaused cause, to which philosophy gives the name of First Cause and which religion calls God. From this point of view God is the only self-existent and all other existents owe their being to Him.

(b) God is also believed in because that belief makes more intelligible the nature of things. The *origin* of reality is a question generally recognized as beyond hope of solution, and is therefore not thought by philosophers to be worth dwelling on. The question, however, regarding the *nature* of reality is a highly significant one. There are, if we omit dualism, too competing views regarding the nature of reality. One holds that nature is mechanical through and through and that the laws of motion and matter constitute a sufficient explanation of all things. Spiritual purposes and values are therefore on this view epiphenomenal. The opposing view holds that nature cannot be understand in terms of the mechanical. This view insists that nature is teleological and lends itself easily to the belief in God. The considerations which lead to a teleological view of reality are as follows: Human experience if looked at in an unbiased way, impresses a beholder with the fact that purposes and values play a large part in determining human behavior. It is also clear that these purposes and values employ mechanical means to get themselves expressed. Human experience, then, reveals two orders of being—the purposive and the mechanical.

Accepting experience in the forms in which it comes to us, the problem is to understand it. The mechanist proceeds by taking the mechanical side of experience at its face value. He treats that side as fundamental, and tries

to derive from it the purposive. Being unable to do so he dismisses as illusory that part of experience which shows us purpose and value. The teleologist, or idealist, on the other hand, insists that it is not fair to treat our experience in this way. Our task is to account for experience as a whole. We should not cast out any part into the region of the unreal because that part shows itself to be incompatible with our theories about experience. He therefore urges that we give an interpretation of reality that will take all the facts into account. This can be done, he points out, by recognizing the reality of purpose, and the fact that purposes can never be expressed except in mechanical ways. If we do this mechanism and teleology will stand no longer opposed to each other, but will find themselves to be complementary views both of which are necessary to account fully for all the facts of human experience.

The teleologists insist, then, that purpose is really present in our experience. We can never account for our behavior without teleological conceptions. But then the question arises. Do human beings radically differ in this particular from reality in the large? The teleologists answer, No. All living forms seem to have ends or values for which they strive. They are therefore purposeful beings. Moreover the evolution of living forms cannot be understood as the happen-so of a mechanical process. Concepts such as "struggle," "endeavor," "fittest," so frequently used by the mechanist, are actually teleological terms. The teleologist warns the novice against letting the seeming simplicity of the mechanistic view of life blind him to its limitations.

Nor are all teleologists convinced that the non-living is purely mechanical. Let us image our world as it was before the dawn of life. Let us suppose further that an

infinite intelligence knew completely the position and motion of every particle of matter. Could such a one predict the emergence of life? By no means, for knowledge, however complete, of a mechanical system will not include the knowledge of purpose and of the organic. This means that there is no way of predicting the purposive from the mechanical. Or stating this otherwise, when life began in our world something new and different from the mechanical emerged. How are we to understand this new thing? If the laws of the mechanical will not account for it, are we not then driven to one of two positions: either to claim that nature in its entirety is purposive, or to hold that life has subdued these mechanical processes to a certain extent to its own uses. The first position is the one favored by the objective idealist; its fellow is sponsored by Bergson and other vitalists.

Both of these positions are favorable to the belief in God. He may well be recognized as the force which causes new qualities to emerge.[2] Or if all nature is thought of as purposive, God becomes identified with the purposive forces in nature and with the forces in nature making for righteousness. He becomes nature acting as the guarantor of the purposive nature of reality and the preserver of values. Pantheism is a close neighbor to this doctrine. Nature is One; it is through and through spiritual; it may well be conceived of as divine.[3]

[2] This is the position of Lloyd Morgan in his recent book, *Emergent Evolution.*

[3] The extreme to which pantheism carries its monism has been adversely criticised on the ground that it makes personality an illusion. To construct a view of reality that will do justice to the unity or oneness of things and at the same time preserve the reality of personality is a difficult undertaking. Theistic monism is a conception advanced by some as best meeting the situation. For a brief statement of this position see Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy;* for a fuller statement see his Bibliography.

(c) In the third place, God's existence accounts best for the wholesome effects of believing. It is held to be a sound principle that where the effects of believing are so good they amount to verification. How, it is asked, can it be otherwise than that a belief which has universally worked demonstrates that it corresponds in its essentials to the nature of things? In other words it is hard to understand how a belief that is not true could consistently function well in a universe of law and order.

(5) *The Pragmatic Path to Belief in God.* The existence of God is not a matter of proof or of disproof. It is a matter of faith. In such circumstances the belief to embrace is the one that produces the best results. Belief that God exists works out far better consequences than belief that He does not. Therefore, it is urged, one is not only justified in believing, but he is under a moral obligation to believe. Pratt reports that eight percent of his correspondents ascribed their belief to these considerations.

In stating that some believe in God in response to social suggestion; that some believe as a result of emotional and affective experiences; that the road to belief for some is ethical reflection; that some are won over by metaphysical arguments; and that some take the direct pragmatic path to belief in God, no claim is intended that only one of these operates in any given case. A plurality of considerations is the rule. Many people even find it hard to state which is the most important determining factor. Very strong believers, Pratt states, are influenced by all the foregoing causes. They coöperate in building up and strengthening their faith.

Roads to Disbelief in God. When an individual does not take over one of the primary beliefs of his group, it usually puts him on the defensive and he has to give an

explanation. Western civilization collectively subscribes to belief in God. When that belief is rejected by individuals belonging to it, the grounds of their objection are worth knowing. A study of the obstacles that hinder belief may prove quite as illuminating as our inspection of the roads to belief.

Before an idea is believed, or accepted as true two conditions must be satisfied. First, it must not verge too narrowly on the self-contradictory. Secondly, it must fit in fairly well with one's general view of reality. Belief in God is frequently rejected because the very concept is thought to violate one or both of these requirements. As idea, it is held that it contains within itself incongruous elements; and in the second place, it is held that the idea does not fit in well with our general view of reality. Now it is obvious that conceptions and definitions of God can be so framed that they will contain inconsistent elements. For instance, represent God as an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent personality, the Creator of heaven and earth, the One in whom we live and move and have our being, and there are those who answer that if He is omnipresent he cannot be personal. The two halves of this conception impress them as being inconsistent. For this reason belief is rejected. It is equally obvious that God can be so defined and reality so conceived that the two will be inconsistent. For instance, the conception of God as the manufacturer of our universe is inconsistent with an evolutionary account of reality. One conception excludes the other. As a result the belief in God may be rejected.

Whoever finds incongruous or inconsistent elements within the idea of God or whoever discovers that the idea of God offered him does not fit in with his general view of reality may adopt one of two courses. He may reject it *in toto,* or modifications may be sought that will

bring his idea of God into more approximate harmony with his views of reality. Contradictory elements may thus become the starting point for changing and in many cases developing ideas of God. This difference raises the question. Why do incongruities in some cases lead to disbelief, while in others they result in a development of the God idea?

(1) *Too Rigid Conceptions as Obstacles to Belief in God.* Hard and fast definitions give rise to conflicts between a fixed idea of God and a fluid view of reality. During childhood a conception of God that is fitted to our limited understanding and experience is apt to get a firm foothold. As one develops the right thing to do would be to modify this idea in the light of growing intelligence and understanding. But schooling finds it much easier to change our childhood conceptions of reality than of God. If those childhood conceptions of God become too set and rigid, the conflict between them and maturer views of reality may end in disbelief.

Three courses are open to the individual on the discovery that his idea of God contains contradictory elements, or that it no longer fits in well with his understanding of the general scheme of reality. One is to modify the idea so as to remove its inconsistencies or readjust it to his general view of reality. Another is to establish compartments in the mind so that his science and philosophy and his religion will have nothing to do with each other. Or he may go so far as deliberately to hold that a belief may be *true* for religion and *false* for philosophy. The third course is to reject the belief in God. Modification and readjustment is the normal and desirable course. The belief in God must go if the idea has become too fixed and the individual refuses to violate the integrity of his mind by using one set of conceptions in

science and a second and conflicting set as a basis for his belief in God.

(2) *God as Unknowable.* Another obstacle to belief in God is the dictum that God is unknowable. God, it tells us, is ineffable. An Unknowable exists that never reveals itself nor is it discoverable in things which human beings can know or experience. This conception of God easily drops away into atheism; for on this view God must forever remain outside the circle of what is known and understood. God is by definition exiled from the realm of human experience. It is for this reason that when the secret is out concerning some feature of the universe, or of some of the conditions of the evolutionary process, or of the psychological principles involved in prayer, mysticism, and conversion, the disappearance of the mystery elements seems to exclude God for many from these particular things. The atheist, once prayer is explained to his satisfaction, takes this removal of its inscrutableness as evidence that God does not exist. Many deeply religious people also feel that even partial explanations decrease the importance of God because they too identify Him solely with the inexplainable. All that is understood they consider removed from His jurisdiction even though they continue to believe in Him.

A little reflection on the nature and limits of knowledge would show that this attitude is born of misunderstanding. How can man learn of God by any other means than through his experience? Say that God is transcendent and still it is true that, in order for us to know Him, He must in some way enter into our experience. If He does not or if we cannot find Him in it, He cannot be an object of knowledge or of concern to us. But if we do find God in our experience, and in the works of nature about us, and in the working of the human mind, should

we not expect these revelations to follow paths of law and order? Certainly hesitation to think of God as lawless and notional is justified. But if God acts according to a uniform plan of His own, that is, according to law, the necessity is over of letting the discovery of uniformities, or laws, lead to disbelief in God or to subtractions from the domain of His being.

He who urges us to believe and at the same time treats the discovered laws of religious life as subtracting that much from the being of God is inconsistent. His ground for urging us to believe is that reality can be better understood by believing. Yet to the extent that we understand reality he turns about and thinks God is pushed to that same extent farther and farther back into the unknown. The atheist who urges us to reject belief in God because he can describe the laws that explain the occurrence of religious phenomena likewise errs. He has no answer to the question, What would the nature of religious phenomena have to be like in order that it should reveal the presence of God?

Both of these groups need to accept the principle that, if God is to mean anything to us, He must be found within our experience, and that no discovery of the uniformities of our experience can reasonably serve as a basis for disbelief in God or for pushing Him farther and farther from us. We have much to learn here from the Greeks, who taught that certain impulses and mental processes in man are divine. Love according to the Greeks is a divine emotion. It is a force that lifts man to a higher plane of existence and inspires him to noble living. To it must go the credit for much of the development of personality and for much of the sheer joy of living. What could be more divine or a better manifestation of deity than this emotion? Wisdom and reason

were also thought by the Greeks to be divine attributes in man.

The belief that God must remain outside the pale of human knowledge and that the discovery of the laws of nature proves Him to be superfluous does not minister well to the needs of the religious consciousness. God has meant most to people who felt that they knew Him. The prophets of Israel, Jesus, and Mohammed all felt that they knew God. God for these leaders was not a transcendent Unknowable. And so it has been with believers in general. Those who have gotten most from their belief have claimed knowledge of God. Yet many continue to conceive of God as an Unknowable. Growing knowledge instead of becoming a source of new appreciation to them of the nature of God serves to render him more remote or to cause them to deny His existence.

(3) *Emotional and Affective Experiences as Obstacles to Belief in God.* Disturbing emotional and affective experiences may result in disbelief in God. Just as the beauty and grandeur of nature and the nobility of man have induced many to believe that God exists, so the pain and cruelty of nature and the sin and meanness of man have driven others to deny His existence. The piled up evil in the universe comes to weigh so heavily upon mind and heart that the only way out seems to be to declare that there is no God. Many went through this experience during the World War. God could not exist, for no God would allow such horrors. These rebellious reactions raise the problem of evil into which we cannot enter here. The point at issue is that violent emotional experiences like despair can undermine belief in God.

(4) *Contra-Suggestion as an Obstacle to Belief in God.* It has been pointed out that social suggestion is probably the most potent of all the stimuli that lead to belief.

Sometimes, however, suggestion operates in the opposite way. By a piece of misconduct a devout believer may fill a non-believer with such contempt as to convert his non-belief into positive disbelief. The remark is fairly common: "If that person is a Christian, I am glad I am not." Contra-suggestions may also grow out of pragmatic considerations. Just as many cultivate belief because in their judgment it works satisfactorily, others deny that the belief works well and reject it on that account.

(5) *Authority as an Obstacle to Belief.* Another source of disbelief is to be found in blind repugnance to all authority. A child who has stood in such great fear of his father that he felt crushed under the weight of his authority may exhibit as a man an intense intolerance for all authority. It was such an experience, we are told, that made Thomas Jefferson so jealous of centralized authority in our national life. God as the supreme representative of authority meets with a cold response from men of this mind. Just as there are some who find belief in God satisfying precisely because of the stabilizing power of His authority, so others to whom all thought of authority is unbearable find belief in God distasteful and reject it. This reaction need not be thought of as wholly irrational. The attitude of protest against authority should be thought of as constituting a strong bias against all considerations which support belief in God and in favor of those which support disbelief.

WAYS THAT BELIEF IN GOD PROVES ITSELF OF VALUE. One of the important reasons pointed out for belief in God is that the belief works well. A number of these ways are now to be briefly described.

(1) *Belief in God Acts as a Wholesome Restraining Force.* In some quarters there is undoubtedly a tendency to place too much emphasis on the fear of giving offense

to God as a support to morality. The individual who declares that except for this restraining influence he would have gone to the bad completely has probably not thought the matter through. He fails to make proper allowance for the many moral sanctions enforced by the group which deter individual members from anti-social behavior. It is just as true, on the other hand that in many quarters too little importance is attached to the fear of God as a restraining force. While this may be due occasionally to contempt for God, it is traceable in most cases to a belief that God is too loving and kind to punish. Many credit God with a mushy sentimentalism which would let the wrongdoer off even if society were to suffer. Such an idea of God is positively detrimental morally. But the belief in a God who demands that people act justly and righteously on pain of punishment must, it would seem, be of value as a reënforcement of good conduct.

Did not such a belief serve as a restraining force upon bad impulses it would amount practically to a denial that man is a rational being. No doubt man is not as rational as some would have us believe. But it does not require a high degrees of rationality to act in the light of certain good and evil consequences which we *believe* will result. A belief that the consequences of immoral acts include discipline at the hands of an offended God who sets an example of justice in his own behavior will influence any normal man to his own good. The extent of that influence will depend upon how strong and vivid the belief is.

(2) *Belief in God as an Urge to Righteousness.* Belief in a God that merits our love acts as a new urge toward righteousness. Since all ethical deities embody the highest moral ideals of the their devotees, love for them tends to cause a believer to strive harder for the

realization of his ideals. Mother love illustrates what we mean. The love which a man has for his mother combined with his high regard for her character constitute an effective appeal to a life made up of acts that he knows she would approve. What we conceive that our mothers would approve agrees, of course, with what our highest selves approve. Hence, the love of mother becomes a powerful force and ally making for righteousness. The same statement applies to love of God. God embodies our highest ideals. If we act in ways that will meet his approval we will be acting as our highest and noblest self dictates.

(3) *Belief in God an Aid to Objectivity in Moral Judgments.* Belief in God can help men to overcome their tendency to measure themselves by themselves. Suppose we are confronted with a moral situation. We are tempted to behave no better than the world expects. The thought of God is a reminder that he expects more of us. What does this mean examined from the point of view of psychology? For one thing, it certainly means that any given situation is not to be looked at from the point of view of our narrow and selfish desires, but rather in the light of what have come to be believed are valid principles of conduct. This survey of the situation in light of our highest idealism lifts us above our egoistic selves to a higher level. In this way the belief in God enables us both to look at the matter objectively, and through the eyes of our highest self.

(4) *Belief in God as an Aid to Meditation.* The hygienic and therapeutic value of meditation is now generally recognized. To turn the mind's gaze on itself; to let it look at itself as it is; to hold the patterns of its ideals before it; to let consciousness be dominated for a season by one's highest aspirations—these are some of the best

ways of promoting the growth of personality. Meditation of this sort is greatly aided by belief in God. God is always endowed with the virtues which we idealize and long for. Our conception of Him contains by projection our most cherished group ideals, and they then possess a degree of reality which we find it hard to bestow upon restricted personal ideals. In making God an object of our meditation, therefore our minds are in reality turned toward our highest ideals and aspirations as they have been "reified" and strengthened by the group.

(5) *Belief in God as a Source of Sympathy.* Frequently an individual feels that his motives are misunderstood, and occasionally it seems as if no one half-way understands his positions. At such times one of the greatest values of belief in God is the conviction that in this difference of opinion between our family or acquaintances and ourselves God is the final arbiter. Thus the misunderstood are comforted. Nothing helps the lone individual to bear the misunderstanding and even the scorn of the world like the conviction that God understands. Indeed, there is a certain risk that the individual may find God such a refuge that he may become too independent and indifferent toward the opinion of the group to which he belongs. The chief value of the conviction that God understands and sympathizes is that it enables a partly ostracized individual to save his self-respect.

(6) *Belief in God as a Source of Strength.* Belief in the backing of a powerful friend is bound to prove a source of courage. If God is with me, who can stand against me asks the man of faith. For this reason he is frequently a man of indomitable resolution who accomplishes what otherwise would be impossible.

(7) *Belief in God as a Guarantor that Some Values are not Perishable.* One of our normal cravings is that

the things we love and strive for shall last and be preserved indeed for eternity. We recoil from the thought that the things on which we have lavished our love and efforts shall be for a moment and then pass away. God comes to the man of faith as the great preserver of values, and in this way our efforts, our loves, our sacrifices become more significant. This belief in God adds immensely to the zest and significance of our moral endeavors.

(8) *Belief in God as a Means of Appreciation of Beauty.* Our beliefs and habitual attitudes have an important influence on what we see. As a rule, we are likely to notice things in harmony with our beliefs or hypotheses. Thus the cynic is inclined to fasten his attention on those traits of character which justify his cynicism. An investigator is more likely to note facts which support his hypothesis than those which tend to disprove it. The lover has eyes only for the perfections of his beloved. The patriot dwells on the creditable and is silent about the discreditable in his country's history. Likewise the conception of reality held by the believer in God increases his sensitivity to the beauty of existence. It opens his eyes to the higher value and meaning of things, and in this way becomes a source of joy and happiness, for these depend largely on ability to appreciate the beautiful and the noble.

IDEA OF A PERSONAL VS. AN IMPERSONAL GOD.[4] The discussion just ended of a number of ways in which the

[4] No implication is intended that God must be conceived either as personal or as impersonal. A conception of God as supra-personal may be possible. However, there is no need of entering into that discussion here. We shall take the two extremes and show how they function, in the belief that the bearing of intermediate conceptions will also be fairly well brought out.

idea of God plays important parts in human life may have seemed to the reader to stand or fall with the conception of Him as a person. It will be in order therefore to raise the question, Must God be conceived as a person in order that belief in God will function helpfully in the religious life?

We begin by asking, What do we mean by an impersonal God? The leading conceptions relating to an impersonal God have been indicated. They are: The signs of purpose in the universe, the presence of the directing force that finds expression in the evolutionary process, something in nature other than man (though it exists also in man) making for righteousness, the reason and order research reports immanent in the universe—these may be quoted as some of the elements combined in the idea of an impersonal God. He would then be defined as a Cosmic control empirically shown to be purposive, energetic and on the side of the good life. Or the totality of being, the Absolute on which all individuals depend may be conceived of as God. It should be noted that these judgments indicate an attitude toward reality which the person who looks upon life as evil would never cherish. Only the person who is impressed with the beauty, value, and wonder of life sees God in the evolutionary process or in the totality of being. Belief in an impersonal God, like belief in a personal God, is largely an affective judgment. Men who are not impressed with the worth of things do not think that any kind of God is needed to account for them. So much for the content embraced in the conception of an impersonal God.

In what ways ought we to expect belief in such a deity to function? Let us reconsider the ways that belief in a personal God proves itself of value as pointed out in the preceding section. Would belief in an impersonal

God or Cosmic Control, empirically shown to be purposive, energetic, and on the side of the good life act as a deterrent from acts of immorality? Yes and probably to much the same extent as does belief in a personal God. The belief that all the colossal pressures of the universe are on the side of the moral implies that the choice of any other than the good life is a piece of hopeless, senseless folly, sure to be a failure from the start.

The efficacy of the belief in an impersonal God or Cosmic Control, empirically shown to be purposive, energetic and on the side of the good life, as an urge to righteousness stands out clearly. Its assurance that coöperation is possible to us with forces of nature making for a richer and fuller life; that the good life is in harmony with the directive purpose in nature; that reality puts its stamp of genuineness on the ends revealed in the moral will of man and more especially in the lives of great religious leaders is a source of inspiration. It may create an invincible determination to follow those courses that make for personal development rather than their opposites that make for personal disintegration.

It has been pointed out that love for an ethical deity reënforces our love of righteousness. This is true whether God be conceived as personal or impersonal. Suppose, for instance we were to think for a moment of the preëminence of Jesus as due to the fact that in Him the elevating forces running through all nature came to their highest and most complete expression. Will not love and admiration for Him serve as before to inspire a greater determination in His followers to be true to those things for which He stood? Will not that determination be as strong as when it is thought that He in some unique way differed radically from the best that our moral environment ever could produce? Indeed, will not the

conception exercise the stronger pull which regards Him as a man who gave the uplifting purposes of the universe free rein to dominate his life completely? In so doing would He not then be revealing what every man is capable of becoming who will place himself in similar harmony with the moral order of the universe?

Regarding the other values of a belief in God little need be added. God as impersonal, that is, God conceived as a Cosmic Control empirically shown to be purposive, energetic, and on the side of the good life provides a way of viewing moral problems in a detached and objective way. God, however conceived, will always embody our highest idealism. The believer in such an impersonal God will, therefore, do his best to make what he conceives to be the good correspond to the true purposes of nature. The evils in nature will never be used by him as the clue to its meaning and purpose. For the pantheist, as well as the theist it is the good in nature, rather than the evil, which furnishes the right clue to the constitution of the universe. It follows, therefore, that belief in God, whether conceived as personal or impersonal, promotes the consideration of moral problems in the light of our highest idealism. In the one case the controlling desire is to act so as to win God's approval; in the other, to act so as to be in harmony with the moral order of the universe.

It is doubtful whether God conceived as impersonal, i. e. as Cosmic Control empirically shown to be purposive, energetic, and on the side of the good life, will function well as a source of sympathy. But in so far as this form of the belief in God leads an individual to consider his true self to be an embodiment of the purposes of nature, rather than a complex of egoistic desires, he is lifted to a level where all risk is over that he will feel too

hurt or become a victim of self-pity. The need for sympathy is met by lifting his situation to a level where the ego becomes of lessened importance, and his view of all things is more in the noble manner of the Stoic: "Let it make no difference to thee whether thou art cold or warm, if thou art doing thy duty, and whether dying or doing something else. . . . It is sufficient. . . . to do well what we have in hand."[5]

Little discussion is required to show that an impersonal deity describable as a Cosmic Control, empirically shown to be purposive, energetic, and on the side of the good life may be looked upon as the preserver of values. Under no view of reality can man look upon himself as self-existent. The theist gets comfort from the belief that the personal God who created man will preserve him and his values. The pantheist gets comfort from the thought that since man has grown from out of the heart of reality, and is the highest and most complete embodiment of its nature, nature will not suffer those things he most values to perish.

That belief in an impersonal God in the form spoken of above may increase sensitivity to the beauty of nature is very apparent. Indeed, this view of God is largely the outcome of deep appreciation of the beauty and wonder of existence. But this form of the belief in God in turn causes an increase of appreciation of nature. Here as elsewhere what we bear away is deeply colored by the attitude that we bring to any given field of our experience.

On the basis of the foregoing psychological analysis we feel warranted in saying that for some minds the belief in an impersonal God may meet many of man's religious

[5] Marcus Aurelius, quoted from Hyde, *The Five Great Philosophies of Life*, 77.

needs. An appeal to history confirms us in making this claim. A study of the great religions of the world reveals instances where an impersonal conception of God has functioned well. That belief in the moral order of the universe may serve as a working substitute for belief in a personal God is shown in the case of orthodox Buddhism. To be sure, Buddhism has changed and, as now generally held stresses the personal rôle of the Buddha and of other Buddhas who from time to time have personalized the moral order of the universe. And we may add that all religions tend thus to personalize the Absolute, and so establish more intimate contact between God and man.[6] But these personalizations may be conceived as some Christians conceive of Jesus, namely, as the highest and most adequate embodiment so far known of the purpose and strivings that form the core of the Cosmos. Indeed, a variation of this thought is stressed in the New Testament passage: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is the reason immanent in things, the divine purpose that is God, and this purpose becomes incarnate in Jesus, though it may become incarnate as truly in all who follow the "way" indicated by Jesus.[7] How attractive this thought is to the religious consciousness is apparent in the present theological tendencies of Christian apologetics as well as in the history of Buddhism and Brahmanism.[8]

[6] Hopkins, *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, 289.

[7] Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible.* Similar tendencies are to be found in many mystics of all religions.

[8] "One might imagine that an impersonal spiritual power, such as that conceived in the pure monism of the Vedanta, would be lacking in religious qualifications, but it would be quite wrong to belittle the deep religious satisfaction which the philosopher draws from his 'Knowledge' that the All-Soul (Atman as Brahma) is to be found in his own self. As is said in the Upanishad: 'Let all the world be sunk

The value of belief in an impersonal God describable as a Cosmic Control, empirically shown to be purposive, energetic, and on the side of the good life should be weighed carefully by all those interested in the development of religion. That belief in a personal God is declining in our group, Leuba maintains in his book, *Belief in God and Immortality*. While philosophy has in general tended to a belief in God, the conception favored is an impersonal rather than a personal one. Today there are trends in science toward the same standpoint. Science is beginning to recognize that nature is purposive. Evidence is multiplying that it is dynamic and that it constitutes an organic unity which is heading out into forms of a higher and higher order. These characteristics summed up together are by many regarded as constitutive of an a-personal God very much as the characteristics displayed in our mental operations are regarded by the same school of thought as constitutive of the being of our minds. When this view of the universe is contrasted with the materialistic view, its superior adaptability to our contemporary religious needs stand out clearly.[9] It makes nature

in God, all that exists upon the earth. Who all renounces winneth all. This soul of All is far away, yet near at hand; 'tis there, 'tis here. In every creature God abides. But he, who in his very self sees God is all in all, he has no fear, naught troubles him. One with his God is he, indeed, who knows the unity of all. What fear of death, what grief is his, who is himself the immortal God.' 'Knowledge' here and in the Upanishad religion generally is always the mystic rapt realization of oneness with God as the All-Soul or cosmic consciousness." (Hopkins, *op. cit.*,) 288.

[9] Paulsen has very graphically stated the position of the materialist regarding human values: "Such reflections are well adapted to give one an overpowering impression of the littleness and insignificance of life. As a loaf of bread is covered with a coating of mildew, with a world of living plants, so too the earth is at any given moment of its long development covered over with a world of living organisms; and among them man appears as a variation of these forms. After a brief

teleological. It says that man and the things he values are values approved by nature and therefore worth her protection. Thus their preservation becomes its highest achievement. So conceived nature provides man and the things he values with a home in the universe. Man does not possess a constitution foreign to it, miraculously created by chance. Upon this view, nature supplies man with something outside of himself with which he may coöperate, something which he can revere and worship.

SUMMARY. This study of belief in God has called attention to the great variety of conceptions of God; it has pointed out that the objective being or reality of God does not stand or fall with any particular conception held of God. The settlement of any doubt regarding the existence of God depends upon the answer given to the question, "Would reality, if adequately known, show a proper warrant and demand for the reverence and worship of man?" On this understanding of the question reasons were given and explained which lead some men to believe in God, and opposite reasons which lead others to disbelieve. Ways were cited in which belief in God proves itself of value in the life of the believer, and an

bloom, this world sinks back again into the nothingness from which it came. One thing alone remains: eternal matter and the laws of its motion. Between the infinite past when there was no life and the infinite future in which there will be no life, the moment of the present and of life emerges—a moment only, though we measure it by millions of years; and at this moment a small portion of infinite matter reveals that wonderful phenomenon of phosphorescence, as it were, which we call self-consciousness or mental life—a brief interlude which, however great and important it may seem to us, is nonetheless an altogether insignificant accident in the history of the immense universe. Matter and motion are the realities, and the strange guise in which motion for a moment appears is as nothing to the universe —"the brief play of a day-fly floating above the ocean of eternity and infinity." (Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy,* 66.)

attempt was made to show that these desirable functionings might still be operative though the God believed in is a-personal rather than personal.

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Chapter VI

BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

The evolution of the belief that human personality in some way survives death furnishes one of the best illustrations of the development that goes on in the conceptions of religion. This present discussion of that belief will run very closely parallel to the procedure adopted in the preceding chapter and will deal with the following topics: (1) The origin of the belief in immortality; (2) Different conceptions of the future life; (3) Why some hold the belief today; (4) Why it is rejected by others today; (5) Its validity; (6) Its importance as a factor in the religious life; and (7) Substitutes for the belief.

Origin of Belief in Immortality. How did man come to believe in a future life? The answer to this question must be couched in terms of the experience of primitive men. Here, as in the quest for the origin of the belief in God, history can produce no records of the actual occurrences. Theories must be constructed regarding its origin based on our knowledge of human nature and on comparatively recent observations of the behavior of primitive men in odd parts of the earth. What experiences can we say, on the basis of our knowledge of human Nature in general and of what anthropologists tell us of primitive man, probably gave rise to the belief in immortality?

It can safely be said that dreams very probably were an important source for the belief in survival after death. It is hard for us to appreciate fully how unquestioned was

the objective reality attributed to dreams in primitive culture. It is said that a Cherokee Indian who dreams that he has been bitten by a snake insists on waking that he be treated for snake bite. He makes no distinction between the two—the one is as real as the other. Naturally a similar degree of reality is attached by men of this level to the men and women that they meet in their dreams or visions even though they are dead. Nor should we be surprised at this state of affairs. Primitive man knows nothing of the mechanism of dreams. How is he to account for these vivid personages otherwise than to take them for what they purport to be. Even Democritus, the father of materialism and one of the greatest of ancient philosophers, believed that dream images are composed of a thin, diaphanous substance. The conclusion is warranted, therefore, that visits of dead people in dreams are partly responsible for the belief that people survive death in the form of spirits. Perhaps primitive man did not go so far as to think that these spirits were able to live on indefinitely. But in any event he believed that identifiable existence does not cease at death.

Another likely avenue to belief that we survive death is to be found in visions and in the "sense of presence." We do not need to dream in order to have visions. Probably most of us have had the experience of sensing the presence of an absent one. Now, suppose that experience comes to a savage as he idles in front of his hut and he feels sure that his dead wife whom he had loved is by his side. Will he not attach to these waking experiences an even greater importance than he does to the similar ones that occur while he is asleep? Many people today attach a great deal of importance to these phenomena. This was especially true during the period of the World War. The inference is sound, therefore,

that these mysterious visitations must have played an important part in the origin of the belief in immortality.

It may be objected, of course, that the appearances of ghosts today are a by-product of the now well established belief in survival, whereas our present interest is in finding the probable origin of the belief. There is some force to this objection, though probably less than at first appears. It may be granted that a person who already holds this belief will be more likely to be called to play the host to an apparition of a dead friend or enemy than one who does not. On the other hand, there are other good reasons apart from belief and expectancy sufficient to account for apparitions. The strong emotions aroused by the death of a dear friend are the source of very vivid memory images. Drop into a daydream at such a time and it is not at all unlikely that one of these vivid images will be externalized or projected. This is by no means an uncommon occurrence. Acute desires may reach a pitch of intensity where they become confused with realities. The same is true of horrible fears. Likewise memory images may become so charged with emotion that they are projected abroad and mistakenly thought to belong to external reality. Appearances of ghosts and the feeling of the presence of one absent, therefore, are not solely dependent on belief in survival or expectation.

The difficulty of conceiving death as cessation is probably another important source of belief in immortality.[1] Children find it hard to conceive dying as an ending. They seem to experience somewhat the same difficulty in conceiving death as cessation that adults have in conceiving the annihilation of matter. Matter may change its form indefinitely, but we cannot conceive its destruction or

[1] See Hall, "Thanataphobia and Immortality," *American Journal of Psychology,* 1915.

annihilation. So the child's view of life seems to be that it may go off somewhere, that is, change its abode; but that it may cease to exist is a thought that never occurs to him. For this reason the child insists on treating its dead as absent but alive. Wordsworth's poem, "We are Seven," is founded on this inability of children to conceive death as cessation.

Very likely it never occurred to our primitive ancestors to conceive of death as cessation. We must remember that even today masses of people look upon life as a manifestation of some vital principle lodged within us. To primitive man who looked upon life in the same way death merely meant that this vital principle had, found new lodgings. It could not die. It had disappeared for a season and when it chose to animate another body it would return. This line of thought connected with belief in survival helped also to account for birth. Must birth not be the act of some disembodied spirit taking human form? As it existed prior to birth so will it exist after death, the reasoning would run and strengthen belief that death was not cessation.[2]

Belief in survival is thus seen to render many things intelligible to primitive man. It accounted for experiences like dreams and "feelings of presence." It threw light upon the process of reproduction. It could be used to explain intuitions and great acts of bravery. It is easy to understand that a belief which contributed so much to make the world of primitive man rational should have been generally accepted.

Conceptions of the Future Life. The diversity in the conceptions of the future life is amazing. Sometimes it has been looked upon with fear and dread, but

[2]Plato makes use of precisely this argument in the *Phaedo.*

in general the future life is depicted in the religions of the world as a happy one—at least for the devout. The promise is given to the believer that the future life will satisfy his deepest desires. The American Indians, for instance, pictured the future life as a life of hunting; the old Norsemen thought of it as one continuous round of fighting and drinking; to the Mohammedan, it was to be a series of banquets attended by beautiful maidens; the early Christian looked forward to it as a life free from the pains and sorrows and evils of this world; the medieval Christian expected to spend it in eternal contemplation and worship of God; the modern Christian pictures it as one continuous round of service and personal development.

In every case the group ideals of the "good life" in vogue determine the picture of the future life that is acceptable. It could not well be otherwise. If the future life is something for us to prize, it must present itself as a life in which we are to enjoy what we conceive to be supremely desirable. Hence, however, the conceptions of the future life may differ in other respects, they all agree in representing it as the fulfilment of the kind of life on which the group in question puts a premium.

Reasons for the Persistence of the Belief. The considerations that account for the origin of a belief do not necessarily explain its persistence. Indeed, in the case of the belief in immortality its sources have very little to do with its perpetuation. The sources are to be found in dreams, visions, the sense of presence in the case of an absent one, and in the difficulty of conceiving death as cessation. None of these operates to any great extent in our day. We understand the mechanisms involved in these phenomena and as a result no longer look upon them as sources of information regarding the nature

of life or the fate of the individual after death. Yet the cultural group to which we belong continues to believe. What are the reasons for the persistence of this belief?[3]

(1) *Social Suggestion Helps Keep Belief in Immortality Alive.* A most important factor in favor of the persistence of the belief in immortality is social suggestion. Group ideals and beliefs have a way of acquiring a certain degree of permanence. They get themselves handed down from generation to generation. Children naturally accept the ideals and beliefs that prevail among their elders. But social suggestion is not in itself sufficient to preserve a belief. Some beliefs learned in childhood are discarded in later life; others are held to the end. This longevity of some beliefs must be due to the fact that they find some support other than past traditions. Hence the necessity of looking for causes other than social suggestion for the persistence of the belief in immortality.

(2) *Ethical Reflections Help Keep Belief in Immortality Alive.* One great support that comes to the aid of belief in immortality is made up of the ethical longings of man. Human nature feels within itself too many possibilities of further development for it to endure the thought that it is to be snuffed out. Three score years and ten are not long enough for us to reach full development, or to get all that is to be gotten from beautiful friendships between highly developed personalities.

Reflections on injustice may lead to the belief that there must be another life in which wrongs shall be righted. There are men so wicked that their consciences have become deadened whom the law may not touch. If the grave be the end and they come to it scot-free, justice is a mere by-word. What also of their victims? Is

[3] See in this connection Leuba's *Belief in God and Immortality.*

nothing ever to compensate them for the injustices they have suffered? Such reflections bring up strong reënforcements to the belief that life does not come to a full stop at death. It must continue in order that justice may be vindicated.

Another great aid to the persistence of belief in immortality is the love and loyalty that will not give the dead up to the grave. We refuse to believe that the separation is final. Attempt to say that our friend has gone, blessed be his ashes, and it sounds like sacrilege. The longing to renew these broken friendships is so keen that, if someone questions the validity of belief in immortality openly, we recoil as if the dead had been insulted.

Some measure of support for the conviction that man must be immortal is also found in the reflection that the evolutionary process, culminating after aeons of preliminary travail and great expenditure of purposive effort in the creation of man, cannot cast the heir of ages aside in a day. So to believe would turn the universe into a meaningless sham. Nay, more, it would prove it to be a hideous mockery, for it has itself created in man this intense desire for immortality. Did it light the light of this great desire merely to extinguish it? Nature does not usually so act. Elsewhere if it implants a strong desire it provides means that will satisfy that desire. Hence the inference that, if nature implanted in man the desire for immortality, as it surely did, then nature can be trusted to provide the means for its satisfaction.[4]

(3) *Psychical Research.* Another aid to the persistence of belief in immortality which seems to exert an influence over a great many people today lies in various psychic phenomena which are interpreted as signs of the survival

[4] See Brown, *Why I believe in Religion*, Chapter VI, "The Hope of Future Life."

of the dead. I shall not discuss the work of the Psychical Research Society more than to say that Coe's criticism, that what psychical research does when it tries to prove survival is to try to prove the presence of personalities seems to me final. But, as he says, we are unable to prove the presence of personalities in everyday life. All that can be done is to posit the presence of personalities and the solipsist is here to remind us that proof of their presence is wanting. And the behaviorist is here to reduce behavior to mechanical operations. If proof of the presence of personalities in our normal social relations is impossible, how can we hope to prove the presence of disembodied spirits? It will always be possible to give an explanation of the phenomenon in other terms.[5]

(4) *Metaphysical Arguments as an Aid to the Persistence of Belief in Immortality.* As long as the soul was conceived as an atom animating the body there was no great difficulty in believing that it might survive the decay of the body. This conception of the soul, however, has been generally abandoned. It is now generally thought to be the form of the body, that is, the self-renewing principle that keeps the interrelated parts of an organism from falling away into incoherence. This conception of the soul renders it harder to conceive a method or means of survival of personality or of consciousness after death. Consciousness, as far as we know, seems inseparably connected with physical instruments.

Believers in immortality, however, do not actually find this difficulty an insurmountable one. They are quite ready to admit that the consciousness we know thus far is intimately tied to and bound up with a physical body. But they ask, Is consciousness dependent on the body?

[5] Coe, *Psychology of Religion,* 290-1.

If so, the relation between them ought to be discoverably clear. But can we show this? Can we understand why or how motion in a nervous arc gives rise to consciousness? If we cannot, then this means that consciousness arises in a way inexplicable to us. Ultimately we are driven into taking the stand that consciousness owes its existence not to our bodies, for these are not self-existents, but to the Absolute or God. Our consciousness has its origin in the totality of being. It has come from God. Must we suppose, then, that its preservation depends on our bodies or on a soul-atom? Reality or God, for all we know, may be of such a nature that it will preserve our consciousness after the nervous system with which it is now correlated has decayed. We have no adequate ground for asserting that the only way nature can sustain consciousness is through a nervous system.[6]

Some defenders of the belief in immortality hold that even in our present state "personal consciousness transcends the physical organism where it resides."[7] I shall quote the argument of Dean Brown in support of this thesis:

> With the X-ray I am able to see quite through the flesh that clothes my forearm and to study the two bones and all the articulations of wrist and hand. I note their condition, detect the presence of injury or disease. I can watch their movements under the muscular action which I may initiate. And in all this I am viewing them as something objective to my own consciousness.
>
> Suppose that we had a more powerful and delicate

[6] See Rogers, *The Religious Conception of the World*, 270.

[7] For an elaborate defense of this position see Bergson, *Matter and Memory*.

> form of X-ray which would enable me to witness those atomic changes and molecular movements in the brain which accompany my changing emotions! By such aid I could then stand before a mirror and watch the physical changes taking place in the brain when I passed from a mood of anger into one of benign feeling, from a sense of despondency into one of joy and hope. In that case who would do the watching? Not the brain itself, for the brain is the thing which is being watched. It is being observed and studied by an intelligent witness of its movements. What do you call that something which views the brain itself as a thing objective to its immediate consciousness? I call that something "the human soul" which survives the physical change we call death.[8]

An argument of this sort is not designed so much to prove the actual survival of death by the individual as to show its possibility, or even more or less remote probability, in order to check the dogmatism of those who claim that survival is impossible or inconceivable. For dogmatism is not limited to those who believe. It is to be found also among those who disbelieve.

Obstacles to Belief in Immortality. Various scientific and metaphysical formulas which have won wide acceptance have done a great deal to undermine belief in immortality. As long as it was thought that human beings were bodies animated by a soul-atom it was possible to believe that death meant the severance merely of the connection, and that the soul atom continued to exist and to preserve its personal identity. Modern philosophy and science, however, have abandoned this view. They de-

[8] *Why I Believe in Religion*, 162.

clare that the connection between soul and body is not of the mechanical kind implied in the soul-atom theory. Body and soul constitute an organic whole. By soul these parties mean the organized life or functions of the body. Not that they contend our behavior can be explained in physiological terms, any more than a cathedral can be explained in terms of the blocks of which it is built. Yet actual cathedrals do not exist apart from building material. So with human personality. While it cannot be explained in terms of the body, yet it cannot exist without one. When the body perishes, it is claimed by this school of opinion, the soul perishes too.

Another obstacle to belief in immortality lies in the difficulty of conceiving what life can be like in its disembodied state. We are unable to picture life in that way. To be sure the task has been attempted. The Greeks pictured it as an existence in possession of a very tenuous body and a very shadowy reality. But who would wish for such a life? The Greeks themselves recoiled from their own picture and stood in dread of the future life. Even if it were not one of expiation and suffering, it was devoid of all joy and real interest. When men today try to picture the future life they go through somewhat the same experience. Life as we know it is intimately bound up with a body. Our bodies, with their appetites and desires, their fears and limitations, are what lend zest to life and make it worth while for the most of us. Of course, if we were all true philosophers like Socrates and Huxley we might be satisfied with an immortality in which our desire to go on knowing forever might find full scope. But a life of that sort, or any life which they can imagine apart from their bodies looks unattractive to many. Accordingly interest in immortality has waned.

Sometimes loss of interest in a future life actually gives place to the desire to die. The will to live is not equally strong in all people. Sometimes disappointment over life becomes so acute that the rest and peace of its cessation seem highly desirable. This mood enables a Westerner to understand how Nirvana, the freedom from the restlessness of desire and from the limitations of individuality, attracts its millions. To them one life seems enough. They may feel perfectly willing to play their part here, but they look with dread upon the possibility of life continuing forever. If life has been rich and full, has it not given all it has to offer? If life has been comparatively full of pain and disappointment, why wish it to be indefinitely extended? The desire to perish is a source of disbelief in immortality just as the desire to survive is a source of belief.

Proving Immortality. A careful perusal of the arguments for and against immortality serves to show that immortality cannot be proved or disproved. Kant long ago gave the reasons why it cannot be an object of knowledge. Immortality must be taken on faith postulated by the moral will. Warrant for the belief is furnished by the fact that it is rooted in our moral needs. Pure reason makes it clear that definite knowledge and proof are beyond our reach, but practical reason sanctions its acceptance on faith by an act of the moral will.

In this way Kant verges closely on the pragmatic criterion of truth that has found considerable favor recently. Those who employ this criterion hold that the validity of the belief in immortality is to be determined by the beneficial or detrimental way that the belief functions in the life of the believer. Does the belief answer to any of our needs? Does it make the world seem a better and more satisfying place in which to live?

Does it aid us in our moral struggle? If so, what more do we need before rendering a verdict in favor of its truth or validity? We must either believe or disbelieve. Knowledge is beyond us. Since belief is productive of much that is satisfying and lends additional zest to our moral struggles belief, it is held, justifies itself by its fruits.

But this solution of the problem by no means appeals favorably to all. Some who are willing to grant that knowledge of the truth or falsity of the belief in immortality is unattainable urge that instead of letting our desires dictate the decision we should weigh the arguments for and against immortality and then believe or disbelieve according to the preponderance of the evidence. We should not sacrifice our intellectual integrity as it seems to them is done when the wish to believe is allowed to run away with us merely because we cannot prove the boon it seeks is unreal. Before a belief is added to our store it ought to be tested and found to fit in harmoniously with the body of facts and theories previously accepted as true. Some, therefore, decline to agree that the validity of any belief can be adequately determined by pragmatic considerations. The validity of a belief must be determined by the inherent reasonableness of its claims, that is, by the degree of probability it can demonstrate in the light of all we know about reality.

Importance of Belief in Immortality for the Religious Life. Belief in immortality has played and continues to play an important rôle in religious life. One great task of religion has been to remove the fear that death may mean cessation by converting it into the hope of a blessed immortality. Some go so far as to hold that religion would perish were the belief in immortality to lapse. And it cannot be doubted that the price many

people demand for becoming religious is a blessed immortality.

The importance attached to the belief in immortality, however, has been on the decline. Not that it is regarded as negligible, but more and more it is realized that the present life, apart from any hope of a future one, should be our chief concern. Accordingly we hear less about how to gain salvation for eternity and more about those things which make for worth-while living now. So great has this shift of interest been in some quarters that the question is justified, Does belief or lack of belief in immortality make any great difference? As data for determining the answer to this question some ways that the belief affects human behavior for good or ill will first be set forth, and then some of the effects of inability to believe.

(1) Belief in immortality makes it easier to face the death of loved ones.

(2) Belief in immortality makes disappointments easier to bear. This life is too short for us to have many disappointments made up to us and this renders them much heavier to bear than if it is thought that compensation for them will be received in another life. The belief that death puts a cessation to life adds gall and bitterness to the disappointment of missing any of its joys and pleasures.

(3) Belief in immortality adds new significance to moral struggles. To feel that we are building character for eternity lends added zest and meaning to an ethical life.

(4) Belief in immortality serves as a brake on evil impulses. Perhaps its importance in this respect has sometimes been exaggerated. But the contention is unreasonable that the belief in immortality, combined as

it usually is with a moral conception of the universe, does not act as a restraining influence on immoral tendencies.

(5) Belief in immortality tends to over-emphasize an other worldly attitude. It has caused men to neglect present social duties in their efforts to insure their future salvation. In this way the belief has encouraged men to follow a do-nothing policy and held them back from greater efforts to make this life a good one. It has, therefore, fostered laziness and lack of spirited effort. Men have been known to cease all effort to realize the great values of life and to spend their time instead dreaming of obtaining them in some miraculous way in a future existence.

In enumerating some of the ways in which belief in immortality affects human behavior some of the effects of disbelief have already been indicated. There remain, however, several others for brief mention.

(1) Disbelief in immortality leads at times to pessimism and despair. One of the most important aids to belief in immortality is the feeling that cessation cannot be the fate of a thing so full of beauty and further possibilities. Belief in immortality thus arises in part from reflections on the worth and significance of life. Some, however, on finding themselves no longer able to believe in immortality declare that life is a sham and a hideous mockery. Originally the beauty of this life caused them to crave and to believe in another. The disappointment involved in giving up belief in another life reacts disastrously upon their opinion of the present one and causes them to declare that it is worthless. Thus our emotions and desires frequently do violence to our reason.

(2) Disbelief in immortality may intensify the conviction that this life is a serious business. If a person believes that he has only one life to live it naturally be-

hooves him, he may reason, to make the most of it. The temptation is removed to project his happiness and well-being into another world. He must secure these riches here and now or go without. It is up to him to take off his coat and pitch in to realize the goods of life in this world. He has no use for the lazy policy of indefinitely postponing all efforts for achieving satisfactory social relations, or for developing a character that shall be sensitive to the beautiful in nature, art, and man. Whatever portion of such happiness is to be his he must get now.

(3) Disbelief in a personal immortality often takes refuge in various substitutes. A deep seated desire that the things he cherishes may not perish makes it impossible for man to contemplate with ease of mind their extinction. Personal immortality would be a means of securing their preservation. Some of those who find that they cannot believe in their own immortality look about for other ways of preserving these values. One way of doing this is to sink the desire for personal immortality in something less egoistic by expanding and so intensifying the interest taken in really more permanent things that the satisfaction found in the thought of their continued existence compensates them for giving up individual immortality. Possessed of the assurance that the things which they most prize and love, are to go on existing, the importance of the continued existence of their own personality diminishes. Santayana has beautifully expressed the ethical idealism of this attitude: "Nature, in denying us perennial youth, has at least invited us to become unselfish and noble."[9]

There are a number of ways in which we may lose

[9] *Reason in Religion*, 255. In his chapter on "Ideal Immortality" will be found a fuller discussion of the various substitutes here described.

our narrow selves in some high form of devotion. The interest of parents in their children is one. The parent whose whole life is wrapped up in his children has by this shift from interest in his own ego, won for himself a kind of vicarious immortality. The life of his children and his children's children extends into the indefinite future, and his own life may become so submerged in love for his descendants that the question of his personal fate may cease to disturb him. So also devotion to nation or race may offer this kind of vicarious immortality to the patriot. More abstract things may serve the same end. Devotion to social ideals and programs may function in this way. Interest in certain social measures, say the abolition of war and the inauguration of universal peace, or in the brotherhood of man and the coming of God's kingdom on earth, may exclude all thought one way or the other in regard to the preservation of the ego. Interest in science may rise to the same height. As Santayana puts it, "lost in such abstract contemplations, the mind is weaned from mortal concerns."

Religion and philosophy have not been unaware of these compensating substitutes for the loss of belief in immortality. The Stoic idealization of universal law was one of the finest of them all. What is good for the universe is good for me, says the Stoic. Personal desires are thus subjugated and swallowed up in the great desire to be at harmony with the universal law. In sinking his own will in the will of universal law, the Stoic becomes in a sense immortal by affiliation. The great pantheistic religions stress the same conception of immortality. To be at one with God, to feel oneself lost in God, to transcend the desires and passions of a finite being through coalescence with the being of God, is the kind of salvation many crave. In this view the preservation of the ego

becomes positively undesirable. All that one wishes continued existence to provide is the realization of the supreme desire of being forever merged in God. Nor is this attitude foreign to theists. Rabia, the great Sufi mystic, so gave herself up to the love of God that her own future became a matter of indifference to her. Hence she was able to exclaim: "My God, if on the day of judgment, Thou sendest me to hell, I shall reveal a secret, which will make hell fly far from me."[10]

Another refuge from loss of belief in personal immortality is in the immortality of influence. Many find comfort in the thought that the characters they build will continue to exert influence after death. No doubt moral efforts acquire greater significance from the assurance that the character that results from them goes on existing and growing forever. Where that assurance is lacking the thought that, whatever may be the influence of the characters we are building it will not cease at our death, serves to compensate somewhat for that loss of belief in personal immortality. While it may not contribute as much to the significance and value of moral effort as the belief in personal immortality, it undoubtedly is a plus factor. How much it adds depends upon how large an extent a given individual is able to sink his own egoistic desires and interests in devotion to the interests of others, or in love of the moral order and the progress of the universe. The fact that immortality of influence is so selfless a form of perpetuity, while personal immortality is so preëminently a boon for oneself appeals to the ideal of unselfishness which attracts all of us. Therefore, instead of the belief in personal immortality appealing to all, there are those who look upon it as something narrow and selfish. The vicarious forms of immortality

[10] Field, *Mystics and Saints of Islam.*

appear to them to possess a higher moral quality, and therefore a superior appeal to their moral natures.

In the light of the preceding discussion of personal immortality and a number of its substitutes, we are now prepared to draw some general conclusions. It is clear that those who think that religion and morality cannot get on without this belief greatly exaggerated its importance. It is equally clear that the influence of the belief never reaches zero. Life never possesses exactly the same satisfactions and can never be exactly the same without this belief. By recalling the ways cited in which the belief in personal immortality functions and the substitutes in which lack of belief takes refuge, the reader can judge for himself how great the difference will be.

It probably will not be amiss to emphasize the point that the future of religion does not depend on the perpetuation of the belief in personal immortality. Immortal salvation is only one of the aims of religion. If belief in personal immortality continues to decline other interests remain for religion to preserve. Indeed, religion would have to address itself to a new task at once, namely, that of aiding the individual to adjust himself to his new world-view in such a way that he will be encouraged to make the most out of the only life he has. Religion will continue to affect men as long as their lives remain full of circumstances beyond their control, as long as they absorb inspiration and encouragement from the presence of their fellows, as long as they take the task of living seriously, as long as they have eyes for the beautiful in man and nature and perceive that which they can love and hold in reverence.

This does not mean to deny that historically the belief in immortality has played an enormous part in human affairs. It no doubt continues to play an important part

today. But this should not be allowed to blind us to the fact that religion is essentially an attempt to obtain through cult practices values that are socially approved. In the group to which we belong religion is largely concerned with attempts to moralize the individual and to aid him in the development of his personality. It aims at salvation, but it is a salvation which is not a post-mortem one.

Indeed, not only is belief in personal immortality, on the decline, but it would not be far wrong to say that doubt is coming to be entertained as to the desirability of its perpetuation. There are many who sincerely feel that in practice it too often saps the spiritual energies of its adherents by encouraging them in vain day dreaming regarding the joys of another world. Moreover, it seems to make too great an appeal to greed and selfishness except where the principle ground for holding it is a desire for the survival of those beloved. Also, by others it is thought to be unworthy of man to allow a desire, however strong, to do violence to his intellectual integrity by causing him to give assent to a belief which does not fit in with his general view of reality. Intellectual honesty must be safeguarded against surrender to the seductiveness of the desire to believe that we are immortal.

SUMMARY. The belief in survival after death is widespread. Its origin may be traced to various experiences such as dreams, sense of presence of an absent one, and the difficulty of conceiving death as cessation. Its persistence may be accounted for by the play of social suggestion and pressure, the longing for an extension of existence which will make possible the attainment of the highest ideals, and a consuming desire for the reunion of loved ones. Support for this belief was found in a number of considerations which, it is agreed, however,

do not prove personal existence after death. The pictures drawn of the future life as we should expect, vary with the cultural situations of the artists. In some cases it is a fearsome picture and this life is loaded down by an incubus of fear of the one that is to be. More generally, however, the future life is pictured as promising satisfaction for our deepest desires as compensation for the evils of this one. The belief has played an enormous part in human affairs. It serves to make life more satisfying in many ways and to lift it to a higher level. Yet those who think that religion and morality cannot get along without this belief exaggerate its importance. Those who are unable to accept belief in personal immortality take refuge in various substitute conceptions which they find more or less satisfying. In some ways these substitutes for personal immortality dwell on a higher level of moral development than the conventional conceptions. Immortality, they say, is to be gained through sinking the ego in unselfish devotion to those aspects of life that give promise of endurance. Personal desires are to be subjugated and swallowed up in the one great desire to be in harmony with universal law or through union with God. When this state is reached the survival of individuality becomes not only of no importance but a positive hindrance in attaining the desire for complete absorption in the Absolute.

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Part III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN THE INDIVIDUAL

Chapter VII

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT BY GRADUAL GROWTH

Introductory. In the foregoing chapters we discussed the influence of the general cultural setting on religion and its objectives. Given a culture of a low order, science backward, government undeveloped, and economic life in a crude stage religion will be of a correspondingly low type. As culture in general moves up the line corresponding changes occur in the objects of chief interest to religion. Thus, in a crude stage of culture the objects of chief religious interest are victory in war, means of protection from disease and pestilence, of securing food, and of reproduction. In a more advance stage of culture the margin of uncertainty regarding these interests becomes so reduced that religion can turn some of its attention from matters of self-preservation to those things which are thought to make the inward life truly worth while. Parallel changes may likewise be seen developing in the conception of God. In a crude stage of culture the gods are gods of fertility and protection, that can destroy the individual and the group, if offended, by famine, pestilence, and the sword. They are not objects of love so much as of fear. In more advanced stages of culture men have learned how to take care of those things better themselves and God becomes the embodiment of all that is considered finest in the inward life. He is still a being to be feared, but for quite different offenses, and much more a being to be loved and revered. Similar changes

also take place in the conception of immortality and in the reasons used to support the belief. In a crude stage of culture the belief is founded on a grossly ignorant reading of simple psychological phenomena; in more advanced groups it is founded on ethical considerations and reflections concerning the nature of God or of the universe.

We have been going on the assumption that the net outcome of these changes has been progress in religion. Yet before we proceed to the study of the religious development of the individual something should be done to justify this assumption. Preliminary to this it is necessary to agree upon a definition of what religion should do. Probably all will agree that religion should stimulate the development of the higher grades of personality. To this end it will seek to moralize and socialize the individual; to develop poise, that is, a fine sense of perspective coupled with the ability to bear disappointments; to put the impress of high ideals upon him and to strengthen his determination to live in accordance with them; to instill in him a deep respect for the personality of others and induce him to cultivate intellectual integrity and honesty. In the interest of this last-named quality it will check up and keep its teachings in line with the best teachings of the age regarding the nature of reality.

We may go further and add that religion should impress upon its devotees the conviction that a life of virtue is its own reward. A life made sensitive to finer things that sinks its ego in devotion to extra-personal interests, it will teach, is a life of incomparably greater richness and fullness than one devoted to the pursuit of pleasure, the acquisition of wealth, or the satisfaction of the appetites. Religion should also impress upon its adherents a proper sense of reverence. The truly religious never grow

flippant in the presence of those things high-minded men in all ages have attempted to conserve. Religion should train its disciples to perceive God in the grandeur and awful power of nature; in the countless stars that make the heavens brilliant at night, and in the immensity of space that passes all comprehension. Even more should it teach its disciples to perceive God in the song of birds, the play of young animals, the joy of children, the idealism of youth, the love of parents, the devotion of patriots, the life of reason, and the moral will of man.

The succeeding chapters are devoted to a study of the processes by which the individual may acquire a religious consciousness of the kind just described. Changes in any individual's religious life that make for a closer approximation to this standard can rightly be spoken of as progress in religious development. We shall now proceed to describe the changes that the individual undergoes in the course of his approximation to the ideal given above, and shall then make a study of the means that organized religious bodies employ to stimulate and promote this development.

Religious development may take place in the individual in two ways. It may come as a gradual growth and be as imperceptible as the unfolding of a flower. We shall speak of this form of religious development as gradual growth. Or religious development may come in the form of a sudden break in character preceded usually by periods of storm and stress. Development of this sort is spoken of as a conversion. Development in the form of gradual growth is the subject of the present chapter.

Moralization of the Individual. No individual's religious development can proceed far which is not preceded or accompanied by his moralization. This moral-

ization of an individual consists essentially in impressing a social emphasis on his will, in making social needs and values the dominant factors in his conduct. This does not mean necessarily that new interests are introduced into his life. It refers to a reorganization of his interests. The difference between an egoist and a socialized individual is a difference of emphasis. In the former narrow self-interests, like ambition for power and glory and headlong desire for the means of satisfying his appetites and living a life of ease and idleness, dominate the personality. In the latter social interest like a desire for the preservation, welfare, and continued advancement of others override self-interest.

Whether the individual will become social-minded or remain an egoist depends in part on his heredity. Education must take this important fact into consideration. But its great task is to make the most of any given individual, allowing for the handicaps of his heredity. Our chief interest, therefore, is in the principles by which this can best be done.

Plato's insight into the moral education of the child and youth has never been surpassed. The child, he maintained, before all else must be taught to appreciate noble deeds and the social virtues; he must be trained to admire instances of heroism; the stories of the gods told him must be morally elevating; the music, poetry, and art to which youth is introduced must be chosen with a view to strengthening his moral fiber. When he has been taught in these ways what to admire, or rather has acquired a proper sense of values and made them an integral part of his character, he is ready to proceed to a more reflective study of what is truly good. But unless proper ends or values have been implanted in the first place, further moral education becomes impossible.

That the above is a fair presentation of modern ideals for the moral education of the child nobody would seriously dispute. In fact this method of nurture is emphasized to such an extent in our own time that we are in danger of overlooking another important factor in the moral education of the individual, namely, the place of fear, punishment, and discipline in the training of youth. The child who has never been taught to fear giving displeasure to his parents, or been punished for violating the commands of those in authority over him, or never been made to feel that the restrictions for the welfare of the group placed upon him must be observed, is unlikely to develop those "negative self-feelings" which will make him sensitively responsive when he grows older to the demands and ideals of the group of which he is a member.[1] His attitude toward the group is like that assumed by an individual toward an inferior. On the other hand, if the child is made to feel that the wishes of others must receive consideration and that there is a social will greater than his own which he must respect, he acquires an attitude of mind that makes him amenable on proper occasions to the opinion of others and the moral ideals of his group.

Increased responsiveness of this kind is a necessary preliminary step in the moralization of the individual. While development of a social will cannot proceed far without it as a beginning,[2] it is not sufficient in itself to bring

[1] *Cf.* in this connection McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology,* Chapter VII, especially 192-207.

[2] "The exercise of inflexible authority over the child prevents, then, his self-regarding sentiment taking the form of pride in the strict sense, pride that acknowledges no superior, that knows no shame, and is indifferent to moral approval and disapproval; it gives the sentiment the form of a self-respect that is capable of humility, of the receptive imitative attitude of negative self-feeling; and, by so doing, it renders the developing individual capable of profiting by example and precept, by advice and exhortation, by moral approval and disapproval" (McDougall, *op. cit.*, 202).

about the moralization of the individual. For that the will also must be subjected to social interests. To secure this it is necessary to have what McDougall calls "the impulse of active sympathy toward harmony of feeling and emotion with our fellows."[3] This impulse is an outgrowth of the herd instinct of gregariousness. It is not true, as some would have us believe, that human nature even at the start is solely concerned with egoistic satisfactions. Impulses arise in both man and animals which find outlet in acts directed toward the good of others. The fish fights for its young; the field rat rescues her young though showing every sign of fear in doing it; the hen fights for her chicks and the bird catches the worm for the nestling.[4] The human mother cares for her offspring; the father labors to support his family; the lover makes sacrifices to do things which will please his beloved and the patriot stands ready to give up life and security for his country. Such acts show that man is as willing on occasion to act for the good of others as for himself.

Yet many find it hard to admit that man can be truly altruistic, that is, moved by concern for others, unenvious of their happiness, or willing to risk life and limb on their behalf. They seem to feel that all human behavior is motivated by self-interest. They insist, for instance, that the patriot acts as he does because he expects to get satisfaction from his service. It may be admitted that a feeling of satisfaction follows in the wake of a great sacrifice self-forgetfully made for country. But self-in-

[3] McDougall, *op. cit.*, 207.

[4] See Shand, *Foundations of Character,* for a statement of this view of altruism and for numerous illustrations; also Patten, *Grand Strategy of Evolution,* and Sutherland, *Origin and Development of the Moral Instinct.*

terest would never find that sufficient pay to induce it to spend itself without stint. The behavior and the satisfaction both indicate the presence of a great desire to serve the country. Likewise the mother gets pleasure from sacrificing for her child. But in making the sacrifice she is not seeking the pleasure. If she were seeking the satisfaction and treating the good of her child as the means she would not receive her pay. Love for her child is plainly primary and the motive of the sacrifice. The same is true of the lover who goes to great inconvenience to please his beloved. When it is done it gives him pleasure. But his act is not initiated by the desire to get pleasure.

When it is admitted that man can develop loves which will dominate his behavior, the secret of how his will may become socialized is a secret no longer. Increase, in the first place, his sensitiveness to the wishes and opinions of others, and appeal to his sense of fairness to decide whether he ought always to try to have his own way. When his mind has begun to register the preferences of others, it is easy to direct his outward-going impulses toward social ends. The aim sought and the process then become that of inducing the individual to love and admire those courses of conduct that make for social welfare. This process may begin, as Plato taught, at an early age by holding up to the child's admiration the social virtues that are portrayed in the lives of heroes and exponents of the public good.

Individuals who have become completely socialized may frequently oppose behavior and customs sanctioned by their group. Thus reformers arise. The explanation of this opposition of picked socialized men to society is not difficult. The reformer is still behaving as a moralized individual, for he is governed by group rather than by

private well-being. He is trying to act up to the group ideals of justice, equality of opportunity, courage, and loyalty. But as he looks about him he observes that the group does not follow its ideals consistently. It stands for the ideal of justice. Yet it may be practicing injustice. Or the same situation may be true regarding some other of its ideals. So the individual with a sharp mind and a keen conscience is forced to make a choice between the avowed ideals and the actual practices of society. He may then urge a reform in practice. The reformer only enters upon his thankless task because he has taken seriously the ideals to which the group is paying simply lip service. Reformers seldom reject the reigning group ideals; they attempt to make the practices of the group conform to them.[5]

Summary. The foregoing account of the moralization of the individual may be briefly summarized as follows: First, the egoistic impulses must be brought under discipline by impressing a social emphasis upon the will. The individual must not be allowed to develop the attitude that recognizes no superior. Otherwise sensitiveness to the ideals of the group will be blunted. Secondly, the individual must be shown examples and thus be led to appreciate the truly noble and to make the interests of the group his own. An individual of this stamp may frequently oppose the group, not because he rejects its ideals, but rather because those ideals have become such powerful influences in his life that practices out of harmony with them become intolerable.

The Religious Development of the Child. Moral development is only a preliminary, though a very necessary step, in the process of religious development. The highly

[5] *Cf.* McDougall, *op. cit.*, 227-233.

developed religious consciousness takes morality and puts it in a cosmic setting; it combines morality with a view of reality which gives increased depth to appreciation of the noble and beautiful wherever found. An examination of the development of the more characteristic attitudes or traits of the religious consciousness will now be made. Our study will divide into three parts, one dealing with the child, another with the adolescent, and the third with the adult.

Few deny the importance of beginning religious instruction in childhood. Hosts of people, however, have no idea of the difficulties in the way of providing adequate religious instruction for the child. Cursory inspection of some of the methods of religious instruction in wide use gives no cause for hesitancy in saying that the child's nature and the function of religion have been grossly misunderstood. It may be well, therefore, to begin our study by pointing out some ways and means which should not be used.

One mistake that has been frequently made is the effort in various ways to force the religious development of the child. He may be coaxed to spend much time rehearsing the Christian plan of salvation and reading religious books suitable only for adults. Or he may be made to believe that he is a doomed sinner and frightened into "repentance." The evil effects of these methods can hardly be exaggerated. Forcing upon the child ideals he cannot yet appreciate through inculcating a great fear of God as a goad plants a kind of demonology in his mind which impedes his later religious development and may psychically main him for life.[6] "Religious precocity, in children," says Professor Wright, "is not less unwholesome than sexual precocity."[7]

[6] *Cf.* Swisher, *Religion and the New Psychology,* 106-7.

[7] Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion,* 237.

In his study of the religious education of the child Cutten mentions a number of practices which he characterizes as horrible example of what should not be done.[8] Songs, like this one for instance, should not be taught them:

There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains,
Where sinners must with devils dweil,
In darkness, fire, and chains.

Here are other samples of songs for children taken from a collection published in 1852:

Little children, stop and think!
Turn away from ruin's brink!

Almighty God, thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night,
And our most secret actions lie
All open to thy sight.

There's not a sin that we commit,
Or idle word we say,
But in thy dreadful book 'tis writ,
Against the judgment day.

And must the crimes that I have done
Be read and published there?
Be all exposed before the sun,
While men and angels hear?

Lord, at thy feet ashamed I lie,
Upward I dare not look,
Pardon my sins before I die,
And blot them from thy book.

[8] *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, 262 ff.

How the minds of little children used to be warped and abused may be seen from this report by Cutten: A New England divine who lived about one hundred years ago talked frequently with his baby girl about salvation, encouraged her to pray often and to read such books as *Pilgrim's Progress,* Parley's *Geography* and *Astronomy,* Callaudet's *Child's Book of the Soul.* On her death at four years of age the father found satisfaction in the thought that from her earlier months such subjects as "life after death, 'the happiness of the good and the misery of the wicked,' were topics of frequent and delightful conversation with her parents."

Such ideas of religious education do not seem to have been uncommon. They received the endorsement of such an influential man as Jonathan Edwards. In his opinion children, no matter how innocent they may seem to us, "if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons." And today, as Cutten says, some revivalists dare to try to frighten children into heaven.

Happily the theology which was at the bottom of such ideas of religious instruction is being discarded. With few exceptions it is no longer felt that children must be convicted of sin in order to be saved. It was natural for those preachers, who believed that all who did not repent of their sins were doomed to an eternity in hell, while all those who repented were assured of eternal bliss in heaven, to use every means to induce children to repent. Inasmuch, however, as children are too young for love of righteousness or for the hatred of sin which accompanies love of righteousness, the most effective way of extorting at least a simulation of repentance from the child was to fill him with a great fear of an impending doom. As a

result, God became for children so brought up a hideous monster who stood ready to send all who did not repent to hell. Happily the most extreme of the barbarous practices just described have been discontinued.

So much for what should not be done. What principles do we propose as substitutes? The nature of the child should mark out the course of religious instruction suitable for it. Wonder and curiosity are typical child traits which provide a valuable clue. Curiosity frequently leads him to ask questions regarding the source and cause of things. This provides the teacher a ready-made opportunity to direct the thought and attention of the child toward a view of nature that is essentially religious. Yet the difficulty of dealing with these questions wisely should not be overlooked. The adult in his attempt to reduce his answer to terms which he has reason to believe the child will understand may oversimplify. Or he may attempt to answer in a way that appeals to men of his own age. If he does the latter the child will of course not be able to understand. If his answers oversimplify the child is liable to obtain a set of religious concepts that are pretty thin and shallow. Yet he may continue to take them very seriously when he grows older and prefer to cling to these ideas acquired in childhood rather than to exchange them for those which represent the level of philosophical thought occupied by the adult religious community. Or, if he is very partisanly loyal to the religious body to which he belongs he may hold to what he thinks are its ideas in the face of damaging evidence and thus introduce irrationalism into his personal religion. Or when he discovers that his religious ideas are childish he may discard them as unworthy of the acceptance of a rational being and let it go at that.

There are no cut-and-dried measures for meeting these

difficulties. We may point out, however, that no one need expect to succeed by pouring concepts into the mind of the learner. All true education comes by self-participation in an active process of assimilation. The learner must work over the concepts which are presented to him and work them into his nature. And any learner can use only what measure of understanding and knowledge he may have in this work. Hence the child, it is obvious, cannot expect or be expected to understand many forms of religious truth. It would seem wise, therefore, to teach the child that he must wait until he is older before he can hope to understand many of the teachings of religion.

Witholding religious instruction for which he is not ready would leave the bloom of mystery that the child loves about his life. Nothing so deadens wonder and dulls the edge of appreciation as oversimplified explanations and answers. The spontaneous response on the part of the child to stimuli from his surroundings is not discouraged in the least by the inability of the adult to explain things to him. That may only prick his imagination to work out explanations for himself. Explanations so obtained would be meaningful to him. But whether or no he is alert enough for that, his mind should not be encumbered with answers which he has either misunderstood or must later discard, if his religious understanding is ever to reach the adult level.

Dealing correctly with the intellectual problems of the child is only one way of assisting in his religious development. Use should also be made of the spontaneous interest of children in each other. Hence, whatever occasions bring them together under good auspices are helpful. Widening their contacts and interests benefits them. They begin to learn consideration for other children. The Sunday school performs this office. In doing things that

must be done together like play, conversation, singing, and reciting, the religious solution of the moral problems growing out of the clash of wills in these social relationships can be driven home.

In the Sunday school loyalty also to the ethical idealism of the group to which a child belongs may be secured by training him to loyalty to a great leader as the means. Loyalty to abstract principles cannot be expected of children. These principles must be personalized. Neither can the child be loyal to a person without showing it by the performance of definite acts of loyalty. Attendance and good lessons at a Christian Sunday school may be made an act of loyalty to Jesus, and the habit of loyalty to Him thus be developed. If Jesus be accepted as the embodiment of the highest idealism of our group, then the child in developing a loyalty to Him in reality develops a habit of loyalty to our best social idealism.

SUMMARY. The religious development of the child should not be forced. The spontaneous interests of the child afford valuable clues regarding the procedure to be adopted in its religious instruction. Some of these spontaneous interests both intellectual and social have been mentioned and suggestions made as to the proper method of dealing with them.

THE RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADOLESCENT. Religious development proceeds rapidly in the period of adolescence. During childhood certain foundations of religious living should be laid. But the sense of personality is too vague, understanding too limited, it sympathies and love too undeveloped in children for them to make religion a personal matter, or for them to have an intelligent appreciation of the religious life. With the dawn of adolescence things change. Broadening sym-

pathies, increasing understanding, and new interests and problems equip the adolescent to appropriate religion as his own, and to make it a matter of vital personal importance. A more detailed description of the characteristics of adolescence will be helpful in understanding the rapid religious development that normally takes place at this period.

Characteristics of Adolescence. Rapid growth of body and brain occurs during adolescence. The increments of this growth are not always perfectly coördinated; nor does the adolescent always know how to handle these new stores of vitality. Hence adolescence is frequently referred to as the "awkward age." The task of getting acquainted with these swift changes tends to direct attention to the self, resulting invariably in a higher degree of self-consciousness.

In the psychological sphere new interests step into the foreground of consciousness. The sex instinct becomes a powerful factor. With its advent in force the psychic life of the individual receives a great impetus. A new bond of love interest takes possession of both sexes and its effects ramify in all directions. Love is a great source of ambition and idealism. It opens the way to a great revelation of beauty. The lover can see in nature a beauty not appreciated by all, which gives rise to a joy that he frequently expresses in poetry and song. His new-found interest will likely also lead him to make voluntary sacrifices to please his beloved. People note with a smile how he renounces one bad habit after another and submits gladly to disagreeable labor in order to win her approval. Acts of this kind, and insights that accompany the dawn of love, render the personality much more meaningful. The adolescent wakes up as from a dream to find in hu-

manity things to admire and to appreciate of which he had not suspected the existence before.[9]

Gregariousness also develops a stronger assertiveness and shows itself possessed of new qualities at this time. Children are gregarious to the extent that they like other children for company, but a sense of solidarity with their group is weak or wanting. They are not inclined to undergo personal inconvenience to keep a group enterprise going. With the coming of adolescence this reluctance departs. An adolescent desires so much to be at one with his group that it makes him willing to undergo many hardships and much pain to establish himself firmly as one of its members. If he fails in trying to do this feelings of isolation and inferiority torment him. When the group extends him a welcome these feelings vanish. Loyalty to his group and sensitiveness to its approval or disapproval feed and grow on such experiences. They are sure signs of a great social awakening.

An intellectual rebirth also occurs at this time. A pronounced characteristic of the child is his acceptance uncritically of what he is told. Well-nigh the opposite is true of the adolescent. He adopts a critical, even a captious attitude toward the knowledge acquired in his childhood. By this means he acquires a big stock of doubts. "In what sense do you mean that the Bible is inspired?" "How can we tell that some person did not write it in order to frighten people into being religious?" To keep his critical attitude company he adopts a resolve to be content hereafter with nothing less than absolute knowledge. The adolescent feels under no necessity of accepting part truths. A proposition is to him either true or false. He does not yet perceive any virtue in fine distinctions or de-

[9] *Cf.* Hall, *Psychology of Adolescence,* Chapters XI and XIV.

grees in truth.[10] The adolescent spurns the idea of compromise; his criteria are rigid and hard fixed. In this respect he is still far from the adult level, for a real adult uses more elastic criteria because of a greater appreciation of the complexity of moral issues and of the niceties involved in all classification.

Adolescence is a period of soaring idealism. The world has come to expect this of youth. Unfortunately it dismisses it all as a mess of impracticable dreams which the dreamer will forget as soon as he is thrown into contact with the hard realities of existence. Too often this is true. The vested interests of society are powerful enough to crush the aspiration of many a youth. Custom soon gets the upper hand and makes acquiescence in social abuses that one had hoped to correct easier and easier. In this way society lets the fresh and disinterested idealism of youth go to waste; and its cynicism at times is so disconcerting that it even makes youth hesitate to confess its idealism.

Another outstanding trait of adolescence is the sudden emergence at this time of an acute degree of conscientiousness. Coe collected a number of cases designed to impress this fact upon us. One farmer boy took so seriously the saying, "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well," that in reaping he would go back and pluck every odd stalk of wheat, even though he realized the wheat thus gleaned was not worth the trouble. A certain girl took the commandment against stealing so literally that she would not take a pin in case of need off the dressing table of her hostess without informing her about it, though she realized that she was acting absurdly.[11]

[10] *Cf.* Coe, *The Spiritual Life,* 58.

[11] *Ibid.,* 74 ff.

This extreme conscientiousness is due to, or mixed up with, many new factors in youthful experience of high importance, such as an increased sensitiveness to the opinion of members of the opposite sex as well as of members of his own group, a sweeping reverence for universal principles and morality in the abstract, a striking intellectual awakening and a firm insistence on getting down to absolute truth, the newly acquired responsibility of facing the problems of life, the war on between a lofty idealism and powerful egoistic desires—these all enter into the creation of a sensitive conscience.[12]

Youth is in many respects the age of electric responsiveness to ideals. The dawn of sexual love; stimuli to ambition; willingness to undergo privations for the beloved; new forms of responsiveness and loyalty to the group that frequently put group interests above individual; an active imagination that paints a picture of a glowing future coupled with a determination to make that picture a reality; a conscience that is very sensitive, perhaps in some cases too sensitive; all these tempt us to call the period of youth the flowering of the race. The adult might very properly from one point of view be regarded as existing for the benefit of youth. Unfortunately this is not the usual attitude. Youth, the elder generation is only too readily inclined to think, is merely the apprentice stage of adulthood. Instead of doing all it can to encourage youth to cherish its idealism and to put it in practice, the elder generation does a great deal to stifle it —the sooner the youth gets over his dreams, he is told, the better it will be for him. But though society does not hold out a friendly hand to the idealism of youth and youth soon disavows most of it, yet none can deny that

[12] The physiological changes taking place in adolescence, especially in the case of girls, contribute to produce a very sensitive conscience.

this too perishable idealism gives the lie even so to the cynic who sees only a selfish and narrow egoism in man; for it shows how different unspoiled human nature is before sordid social conditions have done their evil work upon it.

Difficulties in the Way of Aiding the Religious Development of the Adolescent. In the light of the foregoing account of adolescence it is easy to understand that this should be a period in which religious development advances by great strides. The youth exerts himself to enter into the social life and share the values of his group more fully. His sensitive conscience prompts him to seek the approval of a moral authority as a relief from his oppressive load of moral responsibility. He feels a powerful urge to make his way and to establish an honorable place for himself. Precisely for these reasons this period is one of great difficulties. The elder generation at all cultural levels has recognized this to be the case and has done its best to devise means of aiding youth to become a full member in good standing of the group life. The rites of initiation in primitive society are motivated by this very purpose. In modern life, schools, colleges, churches, and other similar organizations are charged with the task of attending to these adjustments. Three of the most important difficulties which they have to contend with are (1) The disposition to doubt; (2) The tendency to be dogmatic; and (3) The way youth sometimes lets its conscientiousness get out of bounds.

(1) *The Disposition to Doubt.* Doubt does not wait for youth to make its appearance. As soon as broken promises lead the child to draw the distinction between the true and the false the necessary mental background has been acquired for doubt, and he may lose his faith in people and things that disappoint him. But intellectual

doubts first assume importance in adolescence, and indeed, are probably then more numerous and harassing than at any other period. The way doubt is treated and finally disposed of is highly important; for it may either undermine character and all true evaluations or it may open the way to deeper understanding and appreciation of a higher grade. This attitude of mind so freighted with consequences for good or evil will now be studied in respect to: (a) Its sources; (b) Its value; and (c) The best methods of dealing with it.

(a) *The Sources of Doubt.* Doubt may be said to arise from three chief sources: (1) Intellectual growth, (2) Emotional and temperamental disorders, and (3) A set to one's disposition not to believe.

It is obvious that doubt is a natural concomitant of intellectual growth. The child may well believe in fairies, giants, Santa Claus, and in bean stalks a mile high because he knows too little of the nature of reality to doubt their existence. In time, however, the individual in the course of his growth must arrive at less inadequate conceptions of reality. After that fairies and bean stalks a mile high do not fit in with the rest of his knowledge, and first he doubts and then disbelieves in their existence. The same general history of the rise of doubt and its defeat or victory applies to religious conceptions. The child readily believes whatever he is told. As his growth proceeds, however, he gains an ever more orderly view of reality. Whenever he finds that anything told him as a young child pertaining to religion is not in harmony with some recently acquired piece of knowledge doubt very properly arises.

Doubts may also arise from emotion and temperamental disorders. These upsets occur when opposing impulses contend for mastery. At such times a powerful urge to act

in one way is immediately stopped short by some counter impulse. It is as if two horses instead of pulling together were working against one another. The urge to action is inhibited by a conflicting desire or by too great timidity and prudence. Or the will to act may be paralyzed by the necessity felt of considering every possibility and balancing a variety of reasons for and against whatever one may wish to do. This may grow into a habit of indecision and go on to develop in certain instances into servitude to a "fixed idea." Just as an individual may get caught by caution overdone and find himself unable to go to bed nights until he has looked under the bed or has gone around the house once again to see that all the windows and doors are locked, though he knows well enough that they are, so the end of those who put off decision as long as possible may be a seeming inability to act at all, or to accept any proposition. The time never seems to come to stop considering all the pros and cons and to decide that the grounds for a certain course of action or belief are satisfactory on the whole.

The following description of this condition is given by one of these doubters:

> To one whose mind is healthy thoughts come and go unnoticed; with me they have to be faced, thought about in a peculiar fashion, and then disposed of as finished, and this often when I am utterly wearied and would be at peace; but the call is imperative. This goes on to the hindrance of all action. If I were told that the staircase was on fire and I had only a minute to escape, and the thought arose—"Have they sent for the fire-engines? Is it probable that the man who has the key is on hand? Is the man a careful sort of a person? Will the key be

> hanging on the peg? Am I thinking rightly? Perhaps they don't lock the depot"—my foot would be lifted to go down; I should be conscious to excitement that I was losing my chance; but I would be unable to stir until all these absurdities were entertained and disposed of. In the most critical moments of my life, when I ought to have been so *engrossed as to leave no room for secondary thoughts,* I have been oppressed by the inability to be at peace. And in the most ordinary circumstances it is all the same. Let me instance the morning I went to walk. The day was biting cold, but I was unable to proceed except by jerks. Once I got arrested, my foot in a muddy pool. One foot was lifted to go, knowing that it was not good to be standing in water, but there I was fast, the cause of detention being the discussing with myself the reasons why I should not stand in that pool.[13]

The habit of doubting with some people grows into a mania. As Moses says:

> They doubt everything, even their own existence; it (doubt) absorbs all their interests, usurps all their activities, and ends, as we have said, in pessimism, despair, melancholia and suicide. While among us, they are not of us, merely sad and cynical onlookers at the game of life and its players. Their world, as one of them described it, is "a humid prison-cell, where hope flits to and fro, like a poor bat, beating in aimless flight the walls with timid wings, striking its little head against the mouldering roof."[14]

[13] Quoted from Moses, *Pathological Aspects of Religions,* 203.

[14] *Ibid.,* 199.

A third source of doubt is the desire not to believe, that is, downright desire to doubt. Just as desire may make belief easy, so a set to one's disposition not to believe may make belief hard or well-nigh impossible. For example the person who desires to believe in the good motives of another finds it easy to do so, while the person who desires not to believe finds belief hard. Whoever wishes to follow a given career readily believes all favorable reports about it, but is unwilling to accept those that are opposed. The moral person who desires to believe that a life of virtue will be rewarded or is best in itself finds it easy to believe in God, immortality, and the ethical principles advocated by religious leaders. On the other hand, an immoral person, because he desires to remain uninterfered with, finds the beliefs just indicated so uncongenial that he may doubt them all.

(b) *The Value of Doubt.* Some seem to sense the approach of doubt in an unknown way and therefore guard themselves against it. They are like mariners who hug the shore. While they incur no great risk, neither do they win any great prize. Those who seriously and boldly face their doubts are the ones who take great risks, and play for big stakes.

Oscar Wilde seems to have belonged to those unfortunates who let bias toward doubt get completely beyond control. "When I think of religion at all," he writes, "I feel as if I would like to found an order of those who cannot believe; the Confraternity of the Faithless, one might call it, where, on an altar on which no taper burned, a priest in whose heart peace had no dwelling might celebrate with bread and a chalice empty of wine."[15]

Doubt seems to have had a similar grip on a large portion of the French population. According to Moses,

[15] *Ibid.*, 199.

> The cultured French, before the recent Neo-Christian movement, were in this [same] unhappy plight. Instead of enjoying life, they dragged out a miserable existence. Without hope, without a God or an ideal to guide them in their life's journey, and being emotional rather than active and vigorous, they wandered about aimlessly like a child who is lost. "We have no chapel where we can kneel down," cried a journalist piteously, "no more faith to sustain us, no more God to whom we can address our prayer. Our hearts are empty, our souls are without an ideal, and without hope. . . . You who have the good fortune of believing in a Sovereign Ruler, entreat Him to reveal Himself to us, for we long to suffer and die for a faith.[16]

Admitting that doubt may be so handled at times that the results prove undesirable, let us look at the other side of the picture and consider its desirable features. In the first place it should be noted that doubt is an inevitable accompaniment of intellectual growth which it frequently stimulates. Doubt as a critical attitude, presenting its demand for greater logical exactness is a means to the progressive attainment of truth and insight. The uses of doubt have been admirably stated by Cutten:

> Doubt stimulates investigation, thereby freeing religion from past errors and passing on to new intellectual victories. Mixed as it usually is with a certain amount of faith, it maintains a balance which assists in a symmetrical and harmonious development; this is especially true in adolescence. Beliefs never become so really ours as when, receiving them

[16] *Ibid.*, 199-200.

not on the authority of others but after a period of doubt, we decide on their truthfulness. Truth usually carries its authority with it, and a careful search stimulated by doubt not unusually betrays its stamp of genuineness.[17]

Why doubt should in some cases undermine character and paralyze the will and in others lead to new insight and depth of character requires explanation. It is due largely in our opinion to a difference (a) in degree of acuteness (b) in past training, and (c) to variations in the genesis of the doubt.

It should be obvious that however desirable a moderate amount of doubt or hesitation in reaching conclusions may be as an aid to intellectual growth, giving it free rein until it reaches an extreme where everything is doubted, turns it into an obstacle and makes it thoroughly undesirable. We live in a world that demands action. Life cannot be halted to let any of us spend a day or two in debate with ourselves. Too lengthy deliberation may be even more disastrous than too little. Moreover other men occupy the same world with us. A certain amount of mutual trust and confidence between men is necessary for the individual in making his personal adjustments. While whoever trusts everyone may be imposed upon and made to appear simple, he who distrusts wholesale is bound to have his sympathies curdle and thus impede the development of his personality.

Past training must exert considerable determining influence on whether the effects of doubt will be good or ill. Whoever has been taught that morality depends on certain general conceptions of the universe may, on coming to doubt these conceptions, be led to give up his efforts to

[17] *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, 314.

live morally. An individual who has been taught that God has certain definite attributes and characteristic ways of action may on doubting them come to doubt the existence of God. On the other hand, the individual who has been taught that morality is the way of life which the race has found to be most satisfying will continue to strive to live morally no matter what his view of the universe may be. And so it is with belief in God's existence and the other basic tenets of religion. On the other hand, one who has been taught that we cannot define God but that his nature is progressively apprehended as our sympathies and understanding grow is not upset when doubts begin to undermine the conception of God that he has been holding. For that outgrown conception he slowly substitutes a new one that is more adequate and more completely in harmony with his new insight.

It should also be obvious that the source of a doubt has much to do with the value that can be gotten out of it. Doubt which proceeds from a divided self is the expression of a pathological condition. It is not so much the cause of the condition as its immediate effect. It is the symptom of a diseased mind and as such possesses little positive value. Likewise doubt which is caused by headstrong desire not to believe can have no abiding value. Doubt of this kind stands in the way of moral and religious development. On the other hand, doubt which springs from intellectual development and which serves to stimulate that development is of the greatest value and should be highly prized.

(c) *Best Methods of Dealing with Doubt.* If doubt originates in a weakened will or a divided self, the way to aid the doubter is to help him in achieving a unified self. If doubt springs from the refusal to believe on account of the blows that his egoism would otherwise

receive, the doubter must be inspired to espouse nobler and loftier interests. If doubt arises as part of the process of intellectual development, the greatest pains should be taken to direct it fruitfully.

In general, then, we may say that while each case will call for individual treatment in certain respects, yet some general principles should always be borne in mind. Great care must be used not to make the doubter feel that doubt is sinful. Seeking to impress upon the individual who doubts out of love for intellectual honesty and truth that he is committing a sin in doubting at all is the preposterous course that dogmatic theology has too often chosen to follow. The task of the religious leader is not to condemn, but to aid in directing doubt aright and to extend help in the work of mental reconstruction. Moreover the work of reconstruction should not be too hastily rushed. Better let doubt, uncertainty, and groping after truth run their course than to institute a premature reconstruction which may thwart further religious development.

Those who attempt to help the doubter should freely acknowledge their own doubts and lack of knowledge. The quest for a higher life and for a truer interpretation of reality should be represented as a quest on which mankind has been engaged for countless generations, and yet one which each individual must make all over again for himself. While the doubter may familiarize himself with the various answers which other men give to his problems and difficulties he should be warned to rely on his own first-hand contacts with reality in creating a philosophy of life that will bear his full weight. Personal experience is primary and articulate knowledge a derivative in certain high matters. The doubter, however, may be warned against undue simplification and encouraged to look at the question even from unpromising angles; and wise sub-

stitute questions may be called to his attention as alternatives for his own foolish ones. The way should be kept as open as posible for his acceptance of the religious view of reality. But it should be freely admitted that if this view of reality is to mean all that it can be made to mean for him it must be accepted after reflection has made it intelligible and reasonable. Otherwise it will fail him in the pinches because it has not become an integral part of the doubter's personality. A philosophy of life worth having cannot be presented as a gift or forced upon one by compulsion.

In cases where doubt is being carried to such extremes that it threatens to undermine a person's entire usefulness, the wise course probably is to distract attention from the doubts by getting him to fill his life with interesting work. The value of work in overcoming pathological forms of doubt has been admirably stated by Moses:

> There is a prophylatic for this, much more efficient than any philosophical argument or impassioned exhortation, namely, work—interesting and absorbing work. Work, by satisfying a deep-seated instinct in us, gives pleasure and satisfaction and withdraws the mind from morbid hair-splitting, barren reflections and contemplations. Satisfying the instinct of workmanship, if it does not create "the will to live," certainly strengthens it. The muse of idleness is the demon Doubt, and the theme of his dirge is pessimism, despair, death! The doubting mania is probably more a disease of the will than of the intellect, and one of the best means of developing the will is work.[18]

[18] *Op. cit.*, 203-4.

A word of caution, however, should be sounded against always or even generally taking refuge from doubt in work. He who makes this his practice is declining to face his doubts in the effort to win greater understanding. Rather he flees from them. It may be that by so doing he gains new interests and in a way becomes more effective. Salvation of a sort may be won. But is it not too costly? It is far better for most doubters to face their doubts boldly in the hope of ultimately winning through to solider truths that they can rationally hold. The dangers which they run may be greater, but the prize they seek is incomparably more valuable.

Since desire is so powerful a factor in determining belief it follows that if the case can be sufficiently strengthened in favor of more ideal desires and values the doubter may be helped. Preachers, for instance, help him when they succeed in impressing upon the doubter reasons that he considers good in support of an array of values in keeping with the religious sentiment. This creates a mental background favorable to belief in the religious view of life. This is a much better procedure, generally speaking, than any form of attempt to induce the doubter to forget his doubts by losing himself in interesting work. Instead of flight from his doubts he obtains the mastery of them through greater insight and broadened sympathies.

(2) *Tendency to be Dogmatic.* The tendency to be dogmatic is a defect of adolescence closely connected with doubt. Doubt is always painful. It implies suspended judgment, and nothing is more irritating than suspense. For this reason honest doubt is seldom kept up long. People end the suspense by a decision one way or the other. The sensitive conscience of youth, its desire for moral perfection, and its lack of adequate knowledge and

experience make it especially difficult during adolescence to endure suspense. Combined with the foregoing factors that rush youth to premature judgments is the early taught belief that doubt is sinful. As a consequence in many cases youths who suffer torture from doubts[19] seek relief and take refuge in some piece of precipitated dogmatism. Thus the normal length of the period of fresh, unhobbled inquiry is disastrously cut short. Instead of struggling on until he has gained real insight the youth seeks safety and peace in dogmas that in many cases are misinterpreted by him. This has much to do with the degeneration of dogmas into virtually the dried husk of the vital faith of those who formulated them, and for the fact that they frequently sap the spiritual energies of succeeding generations.[20]

(3) *The Way Youth Lets Its Consciousness Get Out of Bounds.* The numerous factors cited show that the conscience of youth is too sensitive to need stimulation. But it does need direction, and unless this is given (1) conscience may become morbid, (2) deadened, or (3) the authority of some supernatural guide may be invoked to quiet it. Conscience has become morbid when trifles unduly worry a person and large amounts of energy are wasted in analytical deliberation that should be used in

[19] Coe, *Op. cit.*, 86.

[20] The value of dogma is not questioned here. Its abuses just indicated however seem very real. Dogmas are most useful to the generation of thinkers, who formulate them in what seems to them to be a rational manner. These formulations or dogmas proceed to become the accepted beliefs of the religious community. Since they were formulated by the use of reflection, reflection is needed to understand them which the very young are unable to give. Yet they accept them on "faith." In this way what was once the most thoroughly reasoned way of conceiving the religious truth embodied in the dogma becomes the least reasoned, an object indeed of irrational belief.

moral action.[21] Conscience may be deadened by first temporizing with and then disobeying it or by refusing to let attention center on moral problems at all. The practice of invoking a supernatural authority to quiet conscience, is of particular interest to us and will be discussed a little more fully.

Men who take the moral life seriously tend to seek supernatural guidance. It is to be expected, therefore, that serious-minded youth should do likewise. The problem which moral perplexities set them is to discover God's will. If that can only be learned anxiety regarding the moral quality of their acts ceases. Thus a tribunal is secured able to settle questions of conscience too hard for settlement otherwise.[22] This solution might seem in every way desirable until we ask the question, what characteristics receive the stamp of God's will? Unfortunately the social ideals and values which youth has accepted uncritically during childhood very largely constitute what it conceives to be the will of God. No doubt giving them this setting strengthens the determination to act in accordance with them. But complete subservience to the elder generation is neither natural nor desirable. Too often, however, it is so complete that attempts to gain further insight into moral problems are nipped in the bud and the authority of God claimed by youth becomes a sanction for what is really its own narrowness and stubbornness.[23]

[21] Coe, *op. cit.*,

[22] Youth in finding in God a moral support gives to God a meaning that the child could not possibly appreciate. The morally immature child is as unable to view God in this way as it is for a person born blind to understand what we mean by color. This again illustrates the truth that religious conceptions must adjust themselves to and keep step with a person's interests and insights. They cannot be imposed upon a mind in a form for which it is unprepared.

[23] Coe, *op. cit.*, 61.

As a basis on which to provide the conscience of youth, then, with the direction which it needs a study of the social sciences is desirable. From such studies he may hope to gain an enlarged understanding of the issues involved in moral problems which will soften his dogmatism. For nothing serves to break down absolutism and formalism in morality so quickly as furnishing moral problems with greater content.

Several more specific ways of helping youth to develop wisdom in matters of conscience and thus of aiding in its religious development must now receive attention.

(1) Youth should be provided with ample means of expressing its altruistic impulses. Unexpressed sentiments sink away into sentimentalism. They create impotent people full of good intentions. Unless youth has set before it a choice of definite ways of expressing its altruism, no good will come of these impulses to others and much harm to those who indulge in them to no purpose.

(2) Patriotism and loyalty to country will help youth to direct its conscience aright. During adolescence strong bonds form between the individual and one group after another. Loyalty to smaller gangs or groups should not be permitted to become the only paths of the outward-going impulse which should find its fullest and most complete expression in loyalty to country, to race, and to mankind. The high significance of the part played by patriotism and strong group loyalties in the development of youth needs to be recognized by religious leaders. Such loyalty is the mainspring of many of man's finest and noblest acts. Oftentimes it will lift the individual to a far higher moral level than he could otherwise have reached.

(3) Finally the religious development of youth may be aided by encouraging him to put a high value upon his

new-found appreciation of the worth and value of things. Adolescence is a time of awakening to wonders within and without. This may come through sexual love, or through the satisfaction and delight gained from membership in a group, or through the birth of new intellectual interests.

SUMMARY. In this section the characteristics of adolescence were first pointed out—the awakening of sexual love, the dawn of greater assertiveness to gregariousness and group loyalty, increased intellectual curiosity, new responsibilities, a lofty idealism, and extreme sensitiveness of conscience. These are conditions most favorable to religious development. Adolescence may be described as a notable period of religious expansion. Indeed, during this period what seems in many cases to be a second birth usually occurs. Youths of this age present the religious leader with his greatest opportunity and obligation. A number of means of aiding the youth to appropriate the adult religious insight and values of his group were pointed out.

THE RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADULT. Religious development, like intellectual development, should continue while life lasts. The religious goal is not something that can be attained in one onset and then possessed forever. Religious development may rather be compared with artistic development. An artist who knows that his skill has improved perceives also that his ideal of perfection has moved up an equal distance. Likewise he who knows that he has developed religiously perceives that he is pursuing a flying goal because his ideals have moved on further and further ahead. Experience brings fresh insight and interests. This spurs him to project new ends to be attained. There is never any danger of reaching a point beyond which further development is impossible.

Apart from mental decay and degeneration new growth is always possible.

The religious development of the adult, as of the child and adolescent, is the outcome of broadening understanding and sympathies; of the assumption of new duties and obligations; of identifying oneself more closely with the religious life of the group; of a deeper appreciation of human nature and human rights; of richer and richer content added to the religious symbols and rites; of a fuller understanding of what God is and what He means to man.

It goes without saying that everyone does not experience continued development. The paths of growth are not easy, down-grade traveling. On the contrary, spiritual growth is uphill work through a country infested with all sorts of dangers. There are many cases of arrested development and in some cases degeneration sets in. Men of sixty can be pointed out who are far on their way to the goal of religious development, but other men of sixty have gone back and are not as far ahead as they were at the age of twenty. It may be well, therefore, to investigate some of the causes of arrested spiritual development and religious degeneration.

A very important cause of arrested development is the deadening or loss of the sense of wonder. This may be the work of habit. For instance, a person may become so accustomed to heroism, love, and sacrifice that he takes them as a matter of course. He lets familiarity deprive these traits of their power of awakening feelings of wonder. Another twisted by cynicism may argue them to be but selfishness disguised. Or it may be that our feeling of wonder at the infinite variety and complexity of nature and life departs as fast as these features are what

is called "explained." We are told, for example, that all life is explainable in the terms of evolution. Really the word "evolution" is no more than a piece of verbal shorthand for ease of reference, yet reputedly able minds have let it become a means of debarring them from the wonder of the realities referred to by the term. They thus allow a descriptive word in regard to nature's processes to rob those processes of their power of astonishment.

Another source of arrested development is the acceptance by any person of a dogma under a sense of duress although it lacks all vital contact with his problems and insights. Under these circumstances instead of proving an aid to religious development dogma stops up the vital sources of religious aspiration, and becomes an obstacle to genuine religious insight. A good example of this may be found in the story of how Jesus on one occasion asked his disciples, "But who say ye that I am?" And Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Now Peter in giving this answer spoke from the heart, as we say, from experience. He had found God in the life of Christ. Christ for him was the God-bringer. Brought up as Peter was, that way of conceiving and expressing what his experience with Jesus meant to him was the best way to make it fit into the rest of his experience and make the rest of his experience feel at home with it. But when later generations make this spontaneous expression which Peter used to describe what Jesus meant to him, into a dogma the acceptance of which is the only means of acquiring an experience with Jesus similar to that of Peter, they are asking us to believe that an effect can reproduce its cause. An explanation never produced the like of the experience it explains. Saying that Christ is the Son of God is meaningless until the one

who makes the avowal is in Peter's condition, i. e. until after Christ has been the God-bringer also to him.[24]

The situation is the same regarding the dogma of the Trinity. If it be accepted simply as an ecclesiastical Christian heirloom it can be of little aid to anyone's religious development. If the Trinity is to remain of real religious value today beyond serving as a means of confessing solidarity with one's group it must be given some content that makes it intelligible. A current view which attempts to do this is stated by Patton as follows:

> Setting aside exact statements and distinctions, and not expecting our forms of thinking to agree with those of the Nicene fathers, we can all say that we believe in God as He is revealed in the universe at large; and we may call Him for that, God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. We believe in God also as He is revealed in Jesus Christ and we may call Him for that, God the Son. We believe in God as He is revealed in human life and human history at large and we may call Him for that, God the Holy Spirit.[25]

[24] This incident as given here is recorded by Youtz and interpreted as follows: "The joy of Jesus can be felt in His quick, strong word of approval: 'Blessed art thou, Peter, you have become aware of God in your life, you have discovered the Living God who works in Me. This is the strongest thing in religion. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the man who has achieved this inner moral vision of God.' 'And then Jesus charged that they should tell no man that He was the Christ.' Why? Because He saw that a fixed idea would then take possession of them that the way to the knowledge of God was to beg it as a gift from Him rather than to seek it as a moral discovery for themselves. If you tell people that believing in Christ's divinity will save them, you offer them the stone of an intellectual transaction in the place of the bread of a religious experience" (*The Supremacy of the Spiritual*, 127-135.)

[25] *Religion in the Thought of Today*, 149.

It is not within the province of this book to undertake to interpret dogmas. Our concern here is merely to point out that the acceptance of dogma is of value just in proportion as its acceptance is demanded by our own religious experience. Dogma no matter how earnestly avowed, if it is foreign to our own forms of thought and experience, can never become a source of religious development. On the contrary it may become a means of preventing us from obtaining those insights that should constitute the basis of wholesome and profitable acceptance of dogma.

Disappointment and disillusionment may also serve as causes of arrested religious development. They frequently dry up the sources of sympathy and appreciation. As long as they are permitted to embitter and lead to cynicism, little hope of healthy religious development need be entertained. Otto has beautifully described the reaction of many to the pains and disappointments which inevitably accompany development:

> Childhood and youth are after all sequestered in a delectable valley, protected from the raw wind and weather of the work-a-day plateau. The year's at the spring, when rains are omens of promise and storms are soon out of breath. Troubles and disappointments are profoundly real—never more so—but they are fleeting, and duration is nine-tenths of pain. So these early defeats and readjustments do not permanently disturb the blue-sky outlook. Life, however, does not permit us to remain in the valley; it pushes us, pulls us forth; and disillusions overtake us in the way. We hope, and are disappointed. We trust, and are deceived. The glowing goal, in realization, turns to ashes. We would change the ordinary weeds of life for a garment more becoming to its worth

> and dignity, but life prefers squalor and rags. We are thwarted by wickedness in high places and weakness in low. We lay dear forms away in the earth drenched by gray rains in the night. Gradually, the assurance so companionable to youth that life has some great hidden meaning, becomes a friend estranged. What is it to grow up but, among other things, to learn that the world is not what we had thought it to be?[26]

Overspecialized interest is another source of arrested religious development. Youth is the time to acquire broad interests. In his youth the individual has not yet committed himself to a circumscribed field. With the man it is different. He feels under necessity to make a success of the new responsibilities which he has assumed and that he must narrow his interests and activities. Specialization is almost forced upon him. He may carry this concentration to a pitch that will prove disastrous to his religious growth. The ideal religious consciousness is one that retains broad interests; one keenly sensitive to changes in social problems of every type; one that seeks to maintain proper relations with God or some impersonal substitute for a personal God. The specialist refuses to give the time required for such varied interests. He is somewhat liable to let himself get detached even from community interests. Specialized interest, while making a person very sensitive to what is going on within his own narrow field, tends to deaden his interest in other fields. Religious development consequently suffers.

Harmful specialization is a thing not unknown even within the religious life itself. Religion embraces three

[26] *Things and Ideals*, 32-33.

things—right belief, right conduct, and respectful observance of cult practices. All religions have a body of beliefs regarding the nature of the universe. They proclaim that whoever accepts these beliefs and views of reality will be brought into relations with the universe that are conducive to a good life. They also teach kindliness, and the social virtues, and insist that right living is an imperative. Religions also keep alive cult practices which are designed to impress beliefs vividly upon the individual and to strengthen his moral will. Now any one of these three aspects of religion may become the exclusively absorbing interest of some devotee. Right belief, for example, may come to assume such importance in his eyes that little or no attention is paid by him to the social virtues and human kindliness. His fanatic zeal for correct belief may drive him into religious persecutions. Or the social virtues may be the object of a similar lopsided devotion and beliefs become a matter of indifference. Religion then shrinks into a social reform movement, which emphasizes external improvement at the expense of internal. Or the observance of the varied cult practices may be made the main business in life. A devotee may become so impressed with the value of prayer and asceticism that his practice of them becomes so constant that his life is practically devoid of social value, so cut off is it from all active human sympathies. The extreme to which asceticism has been carried at times in the history of the Christian church illustrates what is meant here. Such forms of specialization halt religious development which cannot be resumed until they have run this course. For the quest for religious development to be successful the practice must be dropped of emphasizing one aspect of religion at the expense of the others.

SUMMARY. This chapter contains an outline of the

religious development of the individual based upon a gradual accumulation of knowledge, deepening of insight, and broadening of sympathies and interests. The process through which the individual becomes moralized was traced because no individual's religious development can proceed far which is not preceded or accompanied by his moralization. The kind of religious training the child should have received attention, and vigorous exception was taken to certain methods of training now used. Adolescence was declared to be the period of a real religious awakening. Difficulties that the adolescent experiences and methods of helping him were described. Adulthood was regarded as a period for continued religious development. Some conditions that make for this continued growth, and others that arrest religious development, were dealt with briefly.

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Chapter VIII

CONVERSION

Introductory. The preceding chapter described the type of religious development which takes the form of gradual personal growth or expansion free from periods of emotional excitement. It is based on progressive initiation into ever higher degrees of understanding and appreciation in regard to social obligations and responsibilities, and to those things that are of an ennobling, spiritual nature. A second form of religious development is now to be studied which is accompanied by periods of inward storm and stress. Development of this sort seems to lag for a season and then spurt ahead. Sudden changes occur of such magnitude that a man feels as if he had been reborn. Extreme changes of this sort are known as conversions.

Nothing more striking happens in religious life than conversions. Preceding the conversion hour there is usually a period of days, weeks, or months marked by depression, a growing sense of insecurity, insufficiency, defeat, and acute remorse, so profoundly disturbing has the sense of sin become. These tormenting feelings give way, in the conversion hour before an invasion of their opposites, power, security, victory, and peace. The change in the convert has been well described by Swisher:

> Whereas formerly he was at odds with life, now he is presumably one with God, living not under the Law but under Grace, in tune with all that is good

> and beautiful and worthy in the universe. Old temptations no longer have power to lure him from his new love, old fetters of sin have been broken leaving him in a new-found and glorious freedom; he is no longer the "old Adam," conceived in sin and eternally lost, he is the God-man, walking according to the perfect law of God.[1]

There are two outstanding features in conversion which invite explanation, namely, the suddenness of the change and the feeling that it is due to some outside force.

Conversion as an Awakening. A sudden change in outlook and attitude is a common enough experience. Sometimes the change is for the better and is characterized by a firmer grip on things or by a new understanding that brings happiness. Sometimes it is for the worse and is characterized by disappointment that ends in despair and pessimism. A change for the worse seems to have been the experience of John Stuart Mill when he began to question the value of the work he had set himself to do.[2] Betrayal of confidence by a friend may produce like ill effects. On the other hand, let an individual find himself and, his discovery that he is a man with possibilities before unrealized tones up his whole inner life. A person who has found that his life's work is something that he loves to do and can do well experiences a brand new feeling of joy, security, and competency. A great love may stir up similar feelings. A squall of anger may also bring about a sudden change for the better. For example violent expression of his long repressed anger by an individual who has meekly allowed himself to be imposed

[1] *Religion and the New Psychology,* 145.

[2] See Hall, *Adolescence,* I, 565-8. Mill fortunately was able to reconstruct his philosophy of life and to find happiness.

upon may be followed by a new attitude of assertion toward life and his fellows.[3]

The foregoing examples show that some sudden awakenings are quite non-religious. But usually those who experience these sudden changes give the credit for their new realization of personal power and worth, and of the beauty of life and of nature, morality and art to religion. And rightly so. For what can better be regarded as signs and tokens of religious development than just these things? Such experiences as these leave a knowledge of God as a deposit behind them and a moral certainty concerning what God approves and cherishes. It is only the sophisticated who refuse to grant that these changes are religious in character.

Preconversion States. In the days immediately preceding the religious awakening the individual usually spends his darkest hours. This, however, is not universally the case. Conversion may come suddenly without any forerunner in the way of struggle and strain just as the right plan for an essay may emerge into consciousness without effort. There are cases of conversion occurring during sleep. After a good night's sleep persons arise to find that they have radically changed during the night. They discover that a different attitude toward life has taken possession of them; that everything has acquired new beauty and significance. More generally, however, the foreperiod is one of struggle and doubt. Feelings of insufficiency, of insecurity, of guilty remorse, the desire to establish more bearable relations with society and with God are characteristic of this period. Among adolescents and others who have committed no sins of moment the feelings of insecurity and insufficiency predominate; among hardened sinners feelings of remorse.

[3] See Richardson, *Pedagogy of Anger.*

Conversion States. At the time of the conversion the factors that have been causing the disturbance will determine the nature of the relief obtained. If a restless sense of incompleteness and insecurity predominated, feelings of security and joy take their place after the conversion. If intense remorse for sin characterized the foreperiod, the conversion will give rise to a sense of liberation and of relief at having escaped from the burdensome load; life takes on freshness again, as if a new start were to be made. In either event the convert is filled with joy, increased confidence and power; his vitality is raised to a new level. And frequently a great love for men and things in general permeates him. Everything becomes new and more meaningful. Fresh beauty looks up at him everywhere. The world, now that he is filled with this inward sense of the divine, shows itself divine.[4] He feels that he is established upon a satisfactory footing with society, and that God has in very truth invaded his life to transform and elevate it.

Explanation of Conversion. As striking a right-about-face, as conversion is, a full account of it in psychological terms can be made simple. Given an elementary knowledge of the working of the unconscious and of the organization of the mind, no difficulty will be experienced in understanding the psychological mechanisms involved in conversion.

Chapter II pointed out that personality is an organization of sentiments and complexes. Its organizing power succeeds in varying degrees at its task of internal adjustments and poise, but seldom, if ever, perfectly. Frequently two or more disparate or antagonistic interests strive for control within the individual. Today the one set of in-

[4] Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* 146.

terests may be dominant, and tomorrow another is in the saddle. Whatever system is actually in control, the others are repressed for the time being. For instance, when patriotic desire to serve the country is in the ascendency a man's private business into which he has put his best years may be left to its fate. Evil desires may be repressed because the love of social approval puts its veto upon them, or praiseworthy impulses may, be repressed by selfishness and love of vice. Anger, acquisitive impulses, or sex desires may be denied exit for the sake of retaining social standing or cravings for group approval, and desire to be worthy of respect may be trampled upon by surrender to lust. If the repressed desires are strong ones and the victory of the counter-desires is not decisive, conflict continues; it may be carried on on the level of the conscious, or in the unconscious. Victory may fall first to one set of values or interests and then to the other. Where the conflict is carried on in the unconscious between well organized and sharply separated groups of interests, conditions are ripe for the appearance of an alternating personality which will occur should the submerged interests get the upper hand and assume the dominant place. In such cases it is unlikely that any new element has been added to mind. To say that a former conglomerate has found a center of unification is sufficient to account for the change. As James describes it, there are cold and hot spots in our mental organization. A change in personality occurs when elements that were formerly dungeoned in the cold regions come into the hot ones.[5]

Conversion is an unfailing sign that a war is over and a conflict of long standing settled, at least for the

[5] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 195 f.

time being. Religious aspirations, the ideal values of the group, the desire for a life on a higher plane occupied cold spots before conversion. They were elbowed out into the cold by opposing interests captained by a selfish egoism. Conversion occurs when these antagonists exchange places. When that has happened, the part of the individual that dominates is his better self; he is willing to make sacrifices for others because love and appreciation of others is in keeping with his new character. The interests of his fellows are put before his own as naturally as they used to be sent to the rear. Nor is he satisfied until he has publicly proclaimed this change and received some sign of group approval. This newly achieved solidarity abroad with his group is accompanied by feelings of concord and contentment, which are further augmented by the peace of mental unity that reigns at home. What he now desires and what his group approves are the same. Hence the elimination of the most important source of conflicts. In addition, a great relief from the goadings of ambition comes to the convert through his great surrender. By giving himself to God he escapes the spells of frenzied impotence which he formerly experienced when he felt that he had to do it all. Now he places the outcome in God's hands. He has become willing that God should make of him whatever He wills. No wonder conversion is a condition of peace and security, of intense love and happiness.

But to say that a shift from one set of characteristics to its opposite occurs in the mental organization of the convert is only a description. We wish to know why that shift occurs. Here too the explanation is very simple. It can be likened to the shift in government when one set of ministers goes out of power today and a ministry formed of their opponents takes the reins tomorrow. Mis-

fortunes have befallen the country under the rule of the old party which have slowly but surely alienated the country's sympathies from it. The idea of putting its welfare into the keeping of the party out of power gains strength with every fresh blunder of the government. In time the country makes up its mind that the change must be made and the former opposition becomes the dominant party.[6]

So it is with the changing fortunes of the party strife that may go on within an individual. The submerged interests act like the party out of power. They make as much capital for themselves as possible out of everything that turns out unsatisfactorily. And there are many such elements, for life seldom comes up to its promise. The imagined is always freer from disappointment than the actual. In imagination any one can become a composite of the desirable features of various characters. In reality one has to shed many defects in order to realize the one character that appears most attractive. Our past is strewn, as Bergson tells us, with the things that we might have been.[7]

The lives of some of the saints illustrate the conversion process. To the world St. Francis and St. Augustine, for example, were young men who were enjoying their fling at a life of dissipation and licentiousness. The world did not know the many bad half hours that their better natures were giving them which caused them in time to realize that ease and idleness and sensual indulgence were not what their being craved most. Their recoil from the old life carried them to the opposite extreme and they

[6] *Cf.* Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality;* also, James, *Principles of Psychology,* I, 373-401.

[7] *Creative Evolution,* 99-100.

became ascetics. Conversion in general is a similar shift from a lower to what is thought to be a higher plane. The ego-centered life of narrow interests, and perhaps of vice and immorality, loses the day. The desire for a richer and fuller life sidetracked so long, after losing many battles wins the war and receives the right of way.

Our analysis of the great dominant interests in man should help to make the process leading up to this shift still clearer. The urge in man for expansion and growth; the urge to end his isolation by becoming a member of good society; and the urge to be true to what he conceives to be right all play their part in the final victory. Man is so made that he cannot live the life of an animal as an animal lives it. His higher potentialities will not let him. Nor will they let him be satisfied with a life of narrow egoism, for they crave solidarity for him with his fellows. Nor will they give him any peace as long as he remains false to his ideals of good conduct. His present ideals may be superseded later by others still higher; but nonetheless he recognizes that his obligation and duty at present are to live according to them. No wonder then that great disatisfaction, feelings of unrest, insecurity, and incompleteness characterize the preconversion stage.

All this helps to determine the measure of truth contained in the statement of the evangelist that there is no peace for the disturbed soul except that to be obtained from his acceptance of Jesus. Throughout Christendom Jesus is regarded as a personal epitome of all the ideal human values, of the way to God and to satisfactory relations with the universe. In accepting Him fidelity is avowed to the ideal values of the group and membership in good standing in it is applied for. In accepting Jesus an attitude of trust toward God or the universe is ac-

cepted that brings peace and a new feeling of security with it.

An explanation of conversion may be given also in theological terms. There is within man a craving for a richer and fuller life which may rightly be regarded as divine. "Not my will but thine" points the way to that richer and fuller life. A policy of self-assertiveness produces a depleted, improverished life. Full acknowledgement by self-will that God's will is paramount is the only way to fill a human life full to overflowing. Conversion so understood is not opening a door to let God enter one's life but a decision to let Him begin to rule therein. Now, those who believe in a transcendental God should find little or no difficulty in following the psychological description of conversion previously given. All religions teach that salvation for the individual depends on his doing his part. "Make ready for the coming of the Lord," "Seek ye the Lord," "Open the door"—solicitations like these are common to all ethical religions. Our psychological description of conversion may be readily accepted by the theologian if he will regard it as a setting forth of the conditions favorable for inducing an individual to make the great surrender.

Why the convert feels that the change is due to an external power remains to be explained. There are a number of reasons. The genesis of the inspiration of artists, poets, and other creators offers instructive parallels in this connection. The mental processes that burst into bloom as inspiration are carried on under the surface of consciousness. Only when they have completely matured do they crash the gate into consciousness with all the surprise and suddenness of unexpected visitors from abroad. Socrates frequently experienced such spurts of penetrating insight; they led him to regard them as

the work of his good daemon, or as we would say today, of his good angel. So the prophets felt regarding their sudden seizures. Their concern for society was so solicitous that their under-surface minds could not stop working over it in the hours spent in labor and sleep. The solution there reached burst into consciousness as a revelation clamoring to be proclaimed. God had spoken. No doubt, as Wright states, such moments of sudden insight or "inspiration" form one of the experiences that gave rise also to the conception of *mana* among primitive peoples.[8]

A second reason why the convert regards his experience as an invasion of his person is the expectation and desire taught him that conversion is to come in that way. When therefore, the hour of the great experience strikes, naturally this preformed interpretation is given right of way. A third reason for ascribing conversion to an external agency is found in the effects of the experience. An experience so rich in satisfying elements and so freighted with uplifting power must come from God. Its divine quality demands no less divine a source. Since the seat of the divine by most people is regarded as outside man, the convert naturally credits his experience to this outside source.

A fourth reason for regarding conversion as due to an external force is that this account of it is partly true. Suggestion is a powerful factor in many conversions. We can rightly say in these cases that conversion is in part a response to an external agency. The hypnotized subject is under the thumb of an external force; the man in the mob, the disciplined soldier, or a member of a football team is actuated by forces not wholly his own; the

[8] *A Student's Philosophy of Religion*, p. 28.

primitive man is carried away by the play of the group spirit into a state of ecstasy. Similarly the man about to be converted has caught his infection from the surrounding social atmosphere. Something of the isolation in his feeling of individuality disappeared after he joined in the group worship. The bars of his ego, as it were, were lowered. His associates are people who are bent on his salvation and who have urged him to entertain an expectant attitude toward it. A few of his companions get converted. At the succeeding services the excitement and expectancy increase. Finally he himself is swept off his feet and yields. In yielding he experiences intense satisfaction. Conversions so caused may rightly be regarded as the product of an external force—the force of social suggestion. To be sure, previous training and long cultivated expectancy provided favorable conditions, but to social suggestion must be given the credit as the efficient cause of the change.[9]

Conditions Favorable to Conversion. The conditions that favor conversion may be divided into two groups—those that operate from within and those that are due to environment.

Sex is an important inner factor. Conversion seems an easier process for girls than for boys. More girls than boys experience conversion in public. In the group dances of primitive people they are the first "to fall out." Age is also an important factor. The average age of conversion is sixteen and four-tenths years. The ages of its greatest frequency are twelve, sixteen, and eighteen. Before the age of twelve only thirteen percent are converted; after twenty only sixteen percent.[10]

[9] The explanation of prayer given 390 ff. should be suggestive.

[10] Coe, *The Spiritual Life.*

Temperament is the most interesting of the inner factors. On the basis of a thorough examination of seventy-seven adults, all of whom were religious, Coe undertook to select and describe the temperament and combination of mental traits most favorable to conversion. He states that nine out of ten of his subjects who expected to be converted, who had a high degree of sensibility, and were passively suggestible had their expectations realized. On the other hand, of eleven others who had expected to be converted, but who exhibited a predominance of intellect or of will with tendencies toward contra-suggestibility, not one had his expectation realized.

The environmental factors favorable to conversion are early religious education, whatever serves to strengthen the desire for a better life, group expectation, and its powers of contagion.

It is obvious that the person who has been prepared by his early training to expect and to desire a conversion is more likely to experience it, other things being equal, than the person who has not been so taught. The outcome of Coe's investigation shows that early education cannot be depended upon in every case to lead up to conversion. Nonetheless to deny its importance would be to commit as great an error as that committed by those who have in the past overestimated its influence.

It is also obvious from the account accepted here of conversion that whatever increases the desire for a better life is favorable to the capture of the experience. Added tension to desire may be the result of fear, disappointment, satiety, a strong love, inspiring literature, or like causes. Regardless of its source, it always puts new life into the struggle to achieve the triumph of the good desired. At times dread of some evil or dissatisfaction with lives of licentiousness and injustice may become general

and pervade an entire group. Conversions then take place not in one's and two's, but in tens of thousands such as occurred in India under the leadership of Buddha, and in Arabia under Mohammed. These leaders flared up violently against the brutalities and depravities of their times. Others took the same cue from them, first a few and then in hosts. So was it with the founding of monastic orders in Europe. Reaction against the pleasures of this world and an aspiration for a better life became general and gave rise to a great moral awakening or revival throughout Christendom. Whenever disappointment and discontent with things as they are, or fear of some impending danger becomes epidemic, a whole community may be on the verge of big changes.

The great revivals in American history like the New England Revival of 1740-1750 are illustrations of this principle. New England had been settled for the most part by men of deep religious convictions. Their children let down as they became more firmly established and as they prospered. Their grandchildren let down still more. Perhaps the degree of this "back-sliding" has been exaggerated, but certainly New England experienced a lowering of its religious and moral tone. It is also certain that inherited tradition kept them aware of their condition and that people felt they merited the disapproval of God. Under these circumstances the preachers of the period were able to make their audiences quake with fear and resolve to live more in accord from then on with their best religious traditions. The harsh theology used and the excesses to which the preachers went whipped their audiences into an emotional frenzy. But we need not go into that. The point of chief interest here is that a whole population which had sidetracked its religious aspirations

for lower interests, like an individual, experienced a radical change for the better.[11]

The great frontier revival in Kentucky in 1800 wrought a similar transformation. In this community lawlessness was rife. The settlers had come to live in a new, wild country, where neither conventionality nor law held its accustomed sway. The rational restraints of religion were many and strong in their native land, but they were largely absent in the wilderness. They came to live more and more in what they knew to be open violation of the law of their consciences, and of that stern but ethical religion in which they and their forefathers who followed Knox and Calvin had been reared.[12] No wonder when their religious leaders drew vivid pictures of the damnation which awaited the wicked that they felt morally condemned and quaked with fear. A whole population again permeated by an active sense of dissatisfaction with its life which was becoming more acute every day had its long buried aspirations for righteousness resurrected and restored to their proper dominant place by a great religious revival.[13]

Periods of financial depression and crop failures create situations favorable for revivals.[14] An excellent illustration is the revival of 1857.

> At a time of great financial depression, a noonday prayer-meeting for business men was started in Brooklyn, and from this sprang the great revival

[11] For discussion of this revival see Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, Chapter VIII.

[12] Davenport, *op. cit.*, 63.

[13] *Ibid.*, Chapter VI.

[14] Indeed, some revivalists do not hesitate to look upon these hard times as sent by God in order to bring the people back to Him.

which became national in extent. Prayer-meetings were held in all the larger cities. In fact, it was a revival characterized by prayer rather than by preaching. It was born of the need which men felt for something greater than their own ability, hence there was no preacher who might be styled the leader.[15]

A recent case of a great revival on the recoil from a period of lawlessness occurred in Herrin, Illinois. An editorial in the summer of 1925 in *The Ashville Citizen* describes the change:

Herrin was a living and dying example in real life of the worst town ever described in the wildest western fiction written since the early days. State troops have made more trips to Herrin than to any other town or city in Illinois. Much blood was shed in the three years of rioting and fighting and other lawlessness, including bootlegging, moonshining, hijacking and kindred crimes. Scores of men were killed. Herrin was a bad town, indeed.

Herrin, however, is redeeming itself. Rather the people are co-operating with Rev. Howard S. Williams, an evangelist, in its redemption. The angry feuds have been forgotten and Herrin is building anew for peace with the Golden Rule as a foundation. At noon every day, excepting Sunday when the usual religious services are held, the people of Herrin attend prayer meeting in Herrin's largest downtown theatre. Rev. Mr. Williams started the meetings and every day the attendance increased.

[15] Cutten, *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, 183.

> Now, former foes are joining as friends in observing the ways of peace.
>
> A legislative committee from Springfield, the capital of Illinois, recently visited Herrin and witnessed this miracle of civilization. And a miracle it is, too, for the Herrinites were embittered, faction against faction, for years with heavy losses on both sides as shown by the new graves in the cemeteries. And now Herrin is enjoying a reconciliation between these factions. The Herrin sharpshooters are putting as much zeal into their prayers as they formerly employed in hitting their targets. The committee from Springfield found most of the stores closed with signs in the wndows reading: "This place closes daily for the men's noonday prayer meeting. Annex theater."

Group expectancy and its powers of contagion are favorable environmental factors for a conversion. In all group awakenings or revivals we may be certain that group expectancy with its powers of contagion coöperates. In the Kentucky revival group powers of contagion caused members of the crowd to act in strange ways. Sometimes they would "fall" in a vertigo of ecstasy; sometimes they would crack emotionally and get the "jerks"; others would begin to leap like frogs or bark as if treeing the devil.[16] Numerous religious movements during the Middle Ages capitalized these emotional excesses. Among these should be listed the Flagellants, the Dancing Mania, the Crusades—particularly the Children's Crusade—the Monastic movement, and the fear of witches.[17] The powers of contagion exercised by the

[16] See Davenport, *op. cit.*, Chapter VI.

[17] For an interesting account of these see Cutten, *op. cit.*, Chapters XII, XIII, and XIV.

group can be detected in the descriptions of the ghost dances of the Indians, the behavior of the Bacchanals, and of the priests of Cybele. Indeed, whenever masses of people come together and engage in rites the emotions aroused will be greatly intensified by the contagion.

The important office performed by these powers of contagion is generally recognized by religious leaders today, and many of them try to arrange as favorable conditions for their operation as possible. Some of these conditions are (1) packed houses, (2) exercises and activities in common, and (3) narrowing the common attention down to a point of breathless intentness. Anyone acquainted with a great revival will recognize at once that these conditions were present.

Expectancy supplies the current and contagion the wireless transmission in helping to bring about group-conspired conversions. Today a church or a community is careful to create as highly charged an atmosphere of expectancy as possible before the public religious services begin. Its members are urged to pray for "the lost" and to do so in the faith that they will be saved. They are also coached to let "the lost" know of these prayers in their behalf, and to insist that they come to "the meetings." Sermons beforhand which make these appeals and suggestions are preached. Public prayers expend their strength on the same themes. Belief that God is soon to do something wonderful begins to permeate the community. The rising faith of the believers "gets" the unbelievers and they too begin to think that there is something to this expectation of a great revival. When the preacher arrives he does all he can to add fresh fuel to these flames of expectancy by announcing that the church will surely have a great revival if its members will do their part, that is, visit "the lost," and pray for their sal-

vation with burning faith. Otherwise nothing he can do will avail. The surcharged atmosphere of expectancy thus created is a powerful factor in producing the ensuing conversions.

Perhaps a word should be said regarding the relation between the method of producing a conversion or a revival and the value of what is obtained. In admitting that conversion is aided by the same conditions which favor excesses in the mob, or the strange expressions of emotion found in the Kentucky Revivals, or in the crudities of the Bacchanals and the orgies of Cybele, no condemnation is pronounced on conversion or on suggestibility. Sexual love is one of the most powerful influences open to our use in raising a man to a higher level, or transforming his world into a paradise, in spite of the fact that it may also betray him into the most revolting vices and corruptions. So with crowd influence on the individual members. Men can receive impulses from the crowd that will raise them to a level higher than they could reach left to their own unaided efforts. Or they can accept from the crowd impulses that will lower them below the level of brutes. Man is so made that he cannot exclude these stimuli pouring in from without or prevent them from bringing elevating or degrading motive forces with them. Much of the heroism and devotion displayed by him is due to this source. To recognize suggestion as a powerful influence in many a conversion does not commit us one way or the other as to the value of the conversion so obtained. This must be determined by a separate evaluation of the effects of the change.

Duration of the Effects of Conversion. Conversions sometimes prove permanent; sometimes they are short-lived. If conversion be truly described as an upset in the mental organization by which the better self has

grown powerful enough to become dominant, our account of the alternation of selves should protect us from surprise at finding that at times the narrow and egoistic self of old vices, or past habits may vault back into the saddle. Religious leaders recognize the need of safeguards against this "backsliding," and urge the young convert to be on the watch against its first approaches; when he trips they tell him that he must not be discouraged but persist, and he will grow in grace and strength of character.

Ways of aiding the convert to clinch his conversion and make it permanent are also called to his attention. He is urged to form good associations. Spending his time in the company of those who cleave to the same ideals and aspirations he has recently avowed, he is told, will tend to strengthen his own determination to live in accordance with them. Suggestions are also made to induce the convert to make his first attempts to express his aspirations in practical ways. For ideals and aspirations, like muscles, soon atrophy from disuse. To grow and develop they too must be constantly exercised. Hence, it is incumbent on religious leaders to assist the young convert to find something concrete to do. Doctors of the psychoanalytic school attach much importance to this principle. They set their patients who are on the way to recovery to work in helping other patients. In this way their faith in what the doctors have told them is strengthened and thus they aid in effecting their own cure.[18]

Perhaps, however, the greatest single determinant of the permanence of the conversion is the character of the early education of the convert. If his education and training have fostered noble sentiments of considerable

[18] *Cf.* Fay in *Psychoanalytic Review,* October, 1920, "The Case of Jim;" also "The Case of Jack."

strength, these may continue to dominate his life subject to few relapses. On the other hand, if he has never acquired such sentiments and aspirations, his can only be called a pseudo-conversion. His action at the time of his so-called conversion was dictated by the impulse or suggestion of the moment, and the impulse so aroused found no powerful kindred sentiments in him to which it might attach itself. Hence conversion is a temporary affair with him and soon ridicule of himself and the others for having been swept off their feet takes its place.[19]

Gradual Growth and Conversion Compared. In comparing the religious development that proceeds by easy stages of steady growth with that which is acquired in sudden breaks our first observation is that both lead to the same goal. Either method may be used by the conscientious and the ideal posited by the religious consciousness be approximated. Moreover, the methods themselves do not differ as much as would at first sight appear. Conversion is not so abrupt a break in character formation as is generally imagined. The processes leading up to it in the unconscious are not sudden but involve a gradual accumulation of insight and understanding, of devotion to the right, and of aspiration for a better life going on long before the crisis. Where this development occurs in the unconscious and then suddenly breaks into consciousness we have a conversion; where it occurs in consciousness we have a case of religious development of the gradual-growth type as described in the preceding chapter. In reality religious development has been gradual in both cases. In conversion the subject is not specifically aware of the development until it passes the breaking point. This makes it seem to him that he has

[19] See Wright, *op. cit.*, 251-253.

been suddenly remade. But in the other case the individual is fully aware that his insight and appreciation of religious ideals is growing. In the history of his development, therefore, this chapter of a sudden crisis is missing.

In spite of the fact that all religious development travels toward the same end, whether it proceeds by conversion or by easy stages of gradual growth, a very much higher opinion in some quarters is held of conversion. It might be thought from this that conversion made for a more highly developed and unified personality than gradual growth; or that it succeeded in imprinting the social values more effectively; or that it served to reveal the spiritual order of the universe more clearly; or that it brought about feelings of closer kinship with God. Yet none of these advantages can be claimed for it. Why then this claim to a higher status made for it in many quarters?

One reason is that so striking is the conversion state itself that an extraordinary value is put upon it. Effects in the one case may not be different from the other, but this state of ecstasy becomes a valuable religious experience in itself, and reveals, as James says, the spiritual heights man is capable of attaining, if only for a brief period.[20] On the other hand, it should be noted that frequently the convert is disappointed to find that he cannot live forever on the high level of emotional excitement experienced at the time of his conversion. It should also be noted that the excitement which accompanies many of the organized efforts to win converts sometimes takes such undesirable forms as licentiousness and emotional debauches.

Another reason for the extraordinary importance at-

[20] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 257.

tached to conversion is that it has been regarded as a miracle wrought by God. It is natural for those who so interpret it to look upon those who experience it as people especially favored by God. As understanding of the psychological explanation of the conditions that bring about a conversion becomes more general, less and less of this extraordinary importance, it is to be expected will be attached to conversion. Coe records the change that is now occurring.

> Would you understand the emotional aspects of religious experiences? Do not ascribe them to the inscrutable ways of God, but to the ascertainable differences in men's mental constitution; do not theorize about divine grace but study the hidden workings of the human mind.[21]

The historical development of religion is partly responsible for the extra value attached to striking religious experiences. In primitive groups the shamans owed their rank to their visions and other singular experiences. The great religious leaders of the world—Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Paul, and others—all had visions and ecstasies. The saints were usually men and women who had remarkable religious experiences, and even in such philosophical religions as Buddhism and Neo-Platonism he who had experienced the privilege of immediate contact with the Absolute was thought to be especially favored.

Another reason for the preference shown in many quarters for startling and abrupt conversions is the tendency to identify the religious with the mysterious. Only processes that remain strange and weird can surely be identified as the expressions of God. When one of

[21] *Op. cit.*, 140.

these non-understood processes joins the ranks of the understood the divine in it for many disappears. Yet the principle is sound that, if God affects human life, He must do so in definite ways which will submit themselves to description and that can be related to other experiences. Nor can any good reason be given why God should prefer to work only through the emotions and through the unconscious and exclude the intelligence or the rational will of man. God may enter consciousness and use it in self-disclosure as well as the unconscious. Indeed, would it not be the more reasonable view to take of God that He prefers to work through the highest phases of human nature, namely, the conscious processes of intelligence and the moral will? In this connection Coe may well be quoted: "The spirituality of the moral will and the truth-loving intellect must be not merely conceded, but preached, insisted upon, gloried in. This is the foundation upon which the rebuilding must proceed."[22] When the recognition becomes general that religious growth obtained by easy stages of progress is not a whit inferior to that obtained in sudden conversions, those who are unable to experience a sudden conversion need no longer feel the certain degree of anxiety some of them now do as to the genuineness of their religion.

SUMMARY. This chapter has been concerned with the type of religious growth that comes to a crisis in sudden and striking experiences known as conversion. This growth takes the form of a great change in the primary emotional states of the individual, as well as of a reorganization of personality which is felt to be due to some external power. Explanations were offered as to how these radical changes occur and why it is felt that they represent

[22] *Ibid.*, 251.

an invasion from without. Why the convert at times falls back into his old habits and values was next considered and ways and means pointed out of helping him to reduce these lapses in number or avoid them. Reasons were then given why the sudden type of religious conversion has in many quarters been regarded as the superior followed by considerations to show that it was not justified. A certain unity of consciousness and a certain type of organization of personality is the goal of religious development. If this goal is measurably approximated through a conscious process of gradual unfolding, the victory is as valuable as if it had come as the result of a striking conversion.

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Chapter IX

CULT PRACTICES

Introductory. Cult practices are religious customs bearing the sanction of an organized religious group which are designed to establish closer bonds between its members, to promote group loyalty, and to cultivate the religious life. For example, prayer is a cult practice. Its use is urged by organized religious bodies; it strengthens the bonds of unity within the group and it deepens the spiritual life of its component members. Likewise the practice of the mystic way, asceticism, and preaching are cult practices. All of these are urged by one or another religious body, which is evidence of their first rate importance. Later on a chapter will be devoted to each of them. In the present chapter such cult practices as group singing, the reverence shown to sacred objects, the partaking of the Eucharist, the washing of feet, the rite of baptism, offerings, chanting in unison, repeating the creed, and the public display of sacred emblems will be discussed.

At the beginning of this study a word of caution is necessary. To the outsider cult practices mean something very different from what they do to those who practice them. This difference is true of behavior in general as between actor and spectator. The behavior of the lover seems absurd to one who has never been in love. Most of us have been in love and are thus able to view the behavior of other lovers from within, which lessens its absurdity materially. Indeed, on such a view it ceases to be absurd and becomes a revelation of some of the most

beautiful characteristics of human nature. It is the same with cult practices. In order to understand them, some means must be found to view them from within. When so viewed, they too may reveal some of the most admirable traits of human nature.

Origin of Cult Practices. Previous chapters have hinted at the origin of a few cult practices. For convenience of study the sources of cult practices will now be divided into three groups: (1) Outlets for the emotional life; (2) Outlets for the aesthetic interests; and (3) Deliberately devised ways and means of stimulating the religious life.

(1) *Outlets for the Emotional Life.* Some instances of how exceptional emotional experiences serve as the start of what developed into a cult practice have already been cited.[1] Intense fear, anxiety, or grief reaches a point where it refuses to be curbed. When all that human aid can do to help a beloved one who is in danger has been done, it never seems enough. Intercession is inevitable. The Australian, who has done everything that he knows for the safety of his wife who is about to be delivered of her child, cannot resign himself to await the event. So he makes a show of fighting the evil spirits hovering about her even though it be like fighting his own shadow. Likewise the women of primitive tribes are torn with suspense while the men folks are away on the war path. A time comes when they must give expression to their suppressed excitement in action around the camp fire. If the men turn out successful their success may be attributed in part to the behavior of the women, and a ritual is made of their movements which it becomes their duty to repeat

[1] See 108 ff.

whenever the men go to war.[2] Other occasions at which the emotions reach the boiling point are the coming of the spring or the ripening of the harvest. At first the relief and joy were spontaneously expressed in random antics, but soon the expression that relief and joy take became fixed by custom into a cult practice. So with grief. It too was spontaneously expressed in cryings and groanings and screechings. But soon lamentation becomes regulated and it then becomes a duty and thus a cult practice.[3]

(2) *Outlets for the Aesthetic Interests.* The aesthetic interests are also important originating sources of cult practices. It is a mistake to think that man cares only for the light and frivolous. We find evidences in all cultures that the solemn and impressive likewise appeal to him. Something of the strength of this interest may be seen in the ceremonies of European and Asiatic courts, in the ceremonials of fraternal orders and the display of military pomp on high, state occasions. This love for the impressive and solemn finds an outlet in religion in the form of elaborate cult practices such as the processional, chanting, and the respect shown to images. Moreover, necessity combines with a natural love of the orderly and the solemn to regulate the erratic into a formula or cult practice. For when a number of people do something together confusion and chaos cannot be avoided without reducing practice to a formula. Programs and ceremonies so arising speedily become through tradition and association heavily charged with emotion and sentiment. This turns them into cult practices on

[2] For an excellent account of emotional origins for cult practices see King, *Development of Religion,* Chapter VII.

[3] See Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* 389 ff.

which group welfare is thought to hinge and which one violates at his peril.

(3) *Deliberately Devised Ways and Means of Stimulating the Religious Life.* Cult practices arising in the two originating sources described above are largely non-rational. They operate spontaneously. By purposive or rational originating sources we mean that the ends consciously sought by cult practices have been factors in their creation. House-building is a deliberately devised ways and means for satisfying the desire for warmth and protection, as art is for satisfying the love of the beautiful. In the same way we say that some cult practices have been deliberately devised as a ways or means of developing the religious life. If aspiration for a richer and fuller life be one of the characteristics of man, we should expect him to devise ways and means of satisfying it. Some cult practices have been devised as a response to this aspiration. All the great leaders of ethical religions have recognized two sets of opposing forces within man. On the one hand are the desires for physical ease and sensuous enjoyment; on the other, the love of truth, beauty, and moral perfection. Cult practices have been deliberately devised for the express purpose of aiding the love of truth, beauty, and moral perfection to win the day.[4] Illustrations of this third originating source of cult practices can be found in asceticism, monasticism, in the spiritual exercises taught by the Neo-Platonists and mystics of the Middle Ages, in the importance attached to prayer by the world's great religious leaders, and in the general insistence that the religious community shall periodically assemble in one place set aside for this purpose. All of these practices have been devised in part to

[4] In non-ethical religions such as the early stage of Greek religion, cult practices arose to meet other needs. See pages 121-2 above.

stimulate the spiritual development of man. The more psychologists learn of human nature the more convinced they become that the insight which caused religious leaders to devise and establish these practices was psychologically sound.

GROUP WORSHIP. Getting a group of like-minded people together reënforces their faith in what they hold in common. If a number of pleasure seekers get together the spirits of all are keyed still higher. Take a number of people who are bent on some reform, whether it be the abolition of vice or the conversion of the Chinese to Christianity, and the determination of each to aid in the project will be strengthened by bringing them together. Emotions likewise are accentuated by being shared by others. A slight danger may soon create a panic in a crowd; or a slanderous remark stir up a mob. Moreover, emotions may be affected even by the approval of those who do not share them. If an angry person is surrounded by a group which tells him that he should be angry and that they admire his spunk, his anger will become more intense. Likewise, if a person is so full of love and the spirit of sacrifice that he is pointed out and admired in his group as an example of loyalty, those qualities will be put upon their mettle.

The foregoing sheds light on the good effects of bringing together the religious people of a community. Religious assemblies are composed for the most part of like-minded people. The same sentiments and a similar determination to live according to their common ideals are shared by all present. When they all perform the same devotions and give expression to the same faith the religious natures of the component members receive benefit from these exercises. This can be made more apparent by an inquiry into some cult practices.

Reverence for Sacred Symbols. The surroundings and conditions under which religious people perform their acts of devotion themselves exert a profound effect. Presence in a sacred place, surrounded by sacred emblems, is sufficient to arouse through association religious sentiments and feelings of great strength. The Australian when his clan breaks up, takes with him a sacred symbol. Afterward contemplation of this emblem in his loneliness produces something of the emotions he experienced when he was privileged to go through his religious exercises with the group. Sight of the colors of the company fill the patriotic and well disciplined soldier with a "do-or-die" spirit that stands up under the severest tests.

The same principle is in force in advanced religions. There too sacred emblems are powerful stimuli for arousing the religious aspirations of the faithful. Powerful when the individual contemplates them privately, they are all the more powerful when group contagion gets behind them. Approbative presence in a group which is showing reverence for its sacred objects is a feeder of reverence. This effect is somewhat reduced where some of those present do not show the same attitude of awe. Hence the intolerance of the group for the dissenter. To get the maximum effect all members of the group must be of the same mind.

In spite of the fact that the value of symbols for worship is demonstrable, some religious groups seem to desire to abolish symbolism and go so far as to put forward this policy as one of their chief recommendations. No doubt they take this attitude because they fear that symbolism may usurp the rightful place of substance in their worship of God. But however well intentioned the motive, psychology's word to them is that no religious group can really discard or afford to discard all forms of sym-

bolism. Auditory images or symbols may be substituted for visual ones. That may eliminate part of the danger which they feel inheres in the use of symbolism. But nonetheless symbolism persists and must do so in the very nature of the case. No one claims to know God as He is. He must therefore be represented by a symbol rather than presented directly. The word "God" may serve as a symbol to represent God as truly as a pictorial representation may be so used. In this respect its difference is only a difference of degree from such words as "democracy," "liberty," and "equality," which stand for certain social aspirations, that, though not readily explained, do excite good or ill emotional responses. So the word "God" has come by long continued sacred use to stand as a symbol of love for righteousness, of craving and hope for cosmic support, and of all that is thought to be best in human life. And when properly used it becomes a powerful stimulus to arouse to renewed life within us the religious sentiments it represents.[5]

Music. Music is one of the most important elements of public worship. Men tend spontaneously to give expression in music to their emotions, whether of love or hate, grief or elation. It was, therefore, inevitable that man should resort to the use of music both to arouse and express his religious aspirations.

Music in the church is at times the united work of the congregation, at other times of a choir or soloist. Obviously the effect differs in part according to the source. Any form of group activity tends to create a common mind or a crowd in psychological unison. Nothing has greater power to induce this group condition than group singing. Moreover, by varying the music and the words,

[5] The reference here is to our *representation* of God, not to the *being* or nature of God.

the group may be persuaded to adopt almost any given attitude. Religious leaders recognize and act upon this law. If they wish to spur a congregation to some undertaking they make use of militant hymns. By varying the hymns chosen they may make the same congregation intensely patriotic, or fill it with burning devotion to Christ, or cause it to feel abjectly meek.

Undoubtedly congregational singing possesses an advantage over that of the solo in swaying a crowd into psychological unison of the type desired by the leader. In conveying messages the songs of the choir or the soloist perhaps have a bit the advantage. Many messages indeed carry home in song which could not be delivered otherwise. Moreover, it is possible through music to give a significance to a belief or proposition which it had not formerly possessed for many people. For instance, a Christian may subscribe as an intellectual proposition to the faith expressed by the words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and yet that means little by itself. Let him, however, hear these words sung with persuasive force and the beauty of the music may cause them to take on such added significance that they come to him with all the force of a new revelation. They have been burned into his consciousness. He now feels that his whole being has responded to a vital truth.

Chanting and Repeating a Creed. Repeating a creed is a process somewhat akin to that of group singing. It serves to focus the attention of the group upon their common beliefs and aspirations. The creed stands as a symbol of their union in a common faith. The courage, faith, and loyalty of the component individuals are all benefitted by this exercise. Moreover, in repeating a creed one does not merely renew his sense of unity with the living membership. He perpetuates it with the fathers

as well. As Pratt expresses it: "And when the voice of the past as heard in the ritual becomes the voice of our living fellows too, when one hears other worshippers on all sides repeating in tones of conviction the doctrines one has always thought one believed, the force of social confirmation becomes at least for the moment triumphant over doubt."[6]

The creed is designed to make for unity by serving as its open confession. It is an affirmation of commoness in respect to belief and ideals. But as time changes the frames in which people do their other thinking an old creed may become a source of division and is likely to do so if it is insisted upon in a narrow and literal sense. The reason is clear. It is difficult and perhaps impossible for any man to formulate in precise language his own religious truths for himself. It is a great deal more difficult still to devise a formulation for religious truths held to be fundamental to which all will agree. It should not therefore be expected that the creed means exactly the same to all its users. Each subjects it both prior to and after its acceptance to an interpretation of his own. He cannot do otherwise. He must interpret it in terms of his own insight. In this way the creed serves as a unifying agency. When, however, a faction insist that all men shall accept a particular interpretation of the creed handed to them, it is likely to become a source of division.

The Eucharist. The Eucharist is a Christian ceremonial at which the worshipers partake together of bread and wine to commemorate the death of Christ. The bread is a symbol of the body of Christ, and the wine of His blood. This ceremony sharpens the edge of remembrance concerning the sacrificial suffering of Christ and is in-

[6] *The Religious Consciousness*, 282.

tended to be a means of expressing desire to sacrifice self for Him. Certainly this graphic way of representing the passion of Christ should serve to strengthen the aspiration of all the participants to live as Christ taught them to live. Its appeal is to their sense of gratitude and to their admiration for the great self-disregarding love of Christ. As a service it is admirably suited to quicken the spiritual life of its observers.

Some scholars[7] try to put this ceremony more or less on all fours with the pagan practice of killing and eating the animal sacred to the particular god, a ceremony which has been very widely practiced. It consisted in killing an animal, say a bull or a camel, or even in some cases of slaughtering a human being and eating it hurriedly so that none of the divine properties might have a chance to escape. Superficial resemblances exist between the Eucharist of Christians and the pagan religious practice just described; it may even be held that the only difference is that in one case the devotees partake of the real god and in the other he is eaten symbolically. The real difference, however, goes much deeper.

When the ancient Greeks killed the bull and intoxicated themselves by hurriedly drinking its hot blood and eating its raw flesh, they thought they were eating along with flesh and blood and obtaining possession of the great *mana* or vital energy resident in the bull. The same expectation was entertained by the Semitic nomad when he slew and ate a camel in the same ceremonial way. The practice grew out of crude ideas of magic. Historically surface connections may exist between it and the Eucharist. Yet the Eucharistic ritual is very different in its whole spirit

[7] *Cf.* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, one-volume edition, 488; Hopkins, *The Origin and Evolution of Religion*, 177; and Smith, *Religion of the Semites*.

and intention. The Eucharist directs the attention of the worshiper to the sacrificing love of Christ in order to stimulate him to greater sacrificing love in the service of the ideals of Christ. Many of those who observe this symbol have no thought of partaking in any sense of Christ's body of blood. They keep up its use for one thing because it is a time honored means of representing graphically Christ's sacrificial suffering. It is also, of course, observed as an act of respect for His expressed command. It is well to stress these differences. Rest content with outward similarities, and the gulf between the two rites goes unnoted. The ancient rite of eating an animal of the species sacred to the god based its efficacy on the conception that this physical contact with the god imparted to the worshipers something of the god's essence; the rite of the Eucharist seeks to establish contact with God by stimulating a greater devotion in the participant to the Christ ideals. A thorough comparison of these two ceremonies convicts the genetic method of serious limitations.

The Rite of Baptism. Infants and adults both receive baptism. It is obvious that the rite must rest on a different theory in these two cases. How does the baptism of an infant forward its religious development or the religious development of the community? How does the rite of baptism affect the baptized adult?

It is difficult to see how the ceremony of baptism can have any direct influence upon an infant. Perhaps when he is older the appeal that can be made to him as a member of the church or as a baptized Christian will get more results. But the baptism of an infant exerts its chief influence on him indirectly through the influence it exercises over parents and sponsors. For the solemn public pledge of the parents to rear the child in the ideals of the church is an impressive way of proclaiming the importance at-

tached by the group to the obligations of parenthood. The religious sentiment and the sentiment of parenthood join hands and both are strengthened by the partnership. In the degree that it deepens the consecration of the parents, no question but that the religious development of the child is materially aided.

Baptizing an adult affects his life directly. Baptism is an initiation into a body of like-minded people for the adult. He makes an impressive public avowal of allegiance to Christian ideals of conduct and the ceremony assures him the support of the group in that life purpose. Thereafter he feels that he must not let down and disappoint the group. A sacred rite, a public avowal to live according to the ideals approved by the group, group suggestion and expectation—all these social pressures combine to make baptism a means of strengthening the spiritual aspirations of an adult.

When the rite of baptism is administered by immersion its dramatic representation of the burial and resurrection of Christ tends to identify the person so baptized with Christ in His burial and resurrection, and symbolizes in an impressive way the pledge of the initiate to bury his life of sin and to live according to the teachings of Christ.[8]

Offerings. Gifts and offerings as a ways and means of religious development are often neglected or even disputed. Some regard them as a necessary evil of organized worship. It is admitted in principle that contributions of money are necessary to the life of organized worship, but constant calling attention publicly to them is deprecated. It is further recognized by those who feel this way that since there must be contributions all should contribute; for whoever fails to contribute must suffer

[8] See Romans vi. 3-7.

from lowered self-esteem and a sense of isolation because he is not paying his shot or acting in full accord with the group. Such a one fails to get the full benefit of group worship. True as this is, to look upon giving in this way is to lose sight of its positive value.

Contributing time, thought and money, to worthy objects stimulates the development of character and spiritual growth in the following ways: (1) Interest in the institutions and worthy objects chosen grows keener and better informed; (2) Sacrifice and self-denial become easier with practice; (3) Aspirations for the common good find outlet and gain in solidity; (4) Atonement can thus be made for past neglect and the feeling restored of full membership in good standing with the group and with God. Just a word regarding each of these.

No one can contribute time, thought, and money to institutions and worthy objects and not become less and less narrowly self-centered. Contributing to a fund to help needy children and accepting the post of grown-up adviser to one of them may eventuate in rather a big increment of personal development. Contributing with mind and purse to civic improvements, to social righteousness, to education, to the advancement of art, is not at all a one-sided affair; the personal good of the contributor if he is not doing it for that is also furthered. They expand his interests and sympathies and thus directly develop his personality. For we may accept as a true standard of measurement that a personality is rated by the range and kind of subjects in which it is vitally interested.

The sacrifice and denial involved in contributing to worthy causes until it hurts is also an aid to personal growth. Moral development does not come from the satisfaction acquired through self-indulgence. The child

who gets his own way all the time soon becomes a spoiled child. The adult who seldom puts number one to the rear does not develop morally or spiritually. On the other hand if he foregoes the satisfaction of a desire of his own in order to contribute to a worthy cause he practices self discipline that makes for wholesome moral development. The will after all is the backbone of a good character and it thrives best if we regulate our behavior by disinterested ideals rather than by self desire.

Much personal benefit is derived from giving vent to aspirations for the common good at religious services. Frequent opportunity to do so is a real necessity. Outlet for good intentions must be found or they may make us mere sentimentalists. The church is an institution that does much to sustain the forces at work to correct social injustice. Contributing to its life and work enables an individual to express in an effective way his own desire to aid. On such treatment his aspirations for the common good instead of pining away into weak sentiments become more and more powerful determinants of behavior.

Participation in the life and work of the church also provides ways and means of showing contrition and atoning for sins of neglect or weakness. This is important. Sins of neglect and weakness leave behind them a feeling that the sinner has shut himself off from the group as well as from God, and must find some way of restoring broken relations. It is normal for one who has acted unjustly toward another to feel that he must confess and make amends. Much more do the deeply religious feel the necessity of accounting and atoning for their sins to God. Active participation in the life and work of the church meets this need. On these terms it serves as a

substitute for the old rite of sacrifice as a means of restoring right relations with the spiritual world.[9]

Group Worship and Private Meditation Compared. There are people who say that they get more from an hour spent alone in meditation than they do from a religious service. In some cases this may be true. The individual, for example, who finds himself substantially out of harmony with what the group believes and values will likely suffer feelings of isolation and depression from worshiping with them. To get the full benefit of group worship a participant must feel at one with the whole group in its main religious practices. This does not mean that he must believe on all points exactly as the group does. But it does mean that these differences must seem relatively unimportant compared with the things held in common with the group.

Meditation is so extremely valuable that its cultivation should be encouraged in every possible way. Hosts of people dread nothing so much as time spent alone with their own thoughts. They must have something "going

[9] It would be interesting to study the evolution undergone by the cult practice of sacrifice from rites of riddance, on its upward way to becoming a vehicle of communion, love, and gratitude. The history of no rite more clearly brings out the evolution of religion and the changing needs it has met. Hopkins states that the cult practice of sacrifice is the objective link between man and the spiritual world (*op. cit.*, 151). As conceptions of the spiritual world have changed, changes of readjustment have been rendered necessary in the ritual of sacrifice. Conceive the spiritual world to be composed of beings who are cruel and blood-thirsty, and animal, and possibly human, sacrifices will be made. Today the emphasis on social reform and the establishment of righteous, social bodies cause us to think that the spiritual order is predominately interested in these. Hence when we feel that we have offended God our form of making amends is an attempt to aid those causes which we feel God is interested in. We therefore make contributions of time, money and labor to some movement that we think is making for social righteousness.

on" to distract their attention. Hence the avalanche of cheap literature, of the movies, and of the radio. Hence the mad rush of crowds keeping on the move in the effort to forget themselves. Such people seem afraid to discover and get acquainted with themselves. Hours of meditation which would bring them face to face with themselves and with the deeper things of life would give them new depth of understanding, a new philosophy of life, and aid generally in their moral and spiritual development.

Yet it is doubtful if for the great majority of people time spent in solitary meditation is as profitable as time spent in group worship. In the first place, it should be remembered that the aim of religious services is to direct reflection and meditation into channels that are really fruitful. In the next place, they capitalize the fact that man is suggestible. The attitudes and emotions active in those about a person arouse corresponding ones in him. Group aspirations as embodied in song, prayer, creed, and sermon affect him deeply. Solitude cuts him off from the enthusiasm which comes from the group; it deprives him of the benefit of the influences described in this chapter which make for spiritual development. Nor does solitude bring home to him the urgent need of giving expression in some effective way to the aspirations he may feel. The group serves not only as a stimulus for arousing the proper sentiments in those present but also as incitement to give them an outlet.

Moreover it is very important that the individual should take care that he does not become a hermit. If he spends too much time alone he runs the danger of entertaining all sorts of vagaries which may look good to his limited understanding, but have been rejected out of hand by the accumulated experience of the race. All men need to spend some time in solitary meditation, but they need also

to keep in close touch with their fellows. Private meditation should always go hand in hand with group worship. Religion is intended to be a means of socializing the individual, but if he is left too much to solitary reflection and meditation that intent is liable to be defeated. The theories of the recluse are not usually of a kind to commend themselves as desirable social programs.

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Chapter X

PREACHING

Preaching falls under our definition of cult practices, i. e. it is a religious rite which is practiced as a means of strengthening group solidarity and of stimulating religious development. Indeed, one may say that preaching is one of the most important cult practices in the case of an ethical religion. When religion changes and gives up the magical intercession of deities and rites of purification in favor of a desire for right living a tendency develops for the priest to become the preacher. Once the religious leader is no longer thought of as the intercessor or mediator between the group and its deities, he soon becomes a religious instructor who points out the ways of God to men and exhorts his group to follow them. Emphasis thereafter is placed on the building up of sentiments favorable to right living and beliefs which will serve to bring the group into more satisfactory relations with God. The present chapter is devoted to a study of the means employed by the preacher in performing his tasks.

Qualifications of the Preacher. In discussing the qualifications of a preacher it is well to point out that we are not concerned with the qualifications of a pastor or minister. A man may be a very good pastor or minister who is not a good preacher; or he may be a good preacher and yet not be a good pastor. The duties of the head of a church are many and varied. This study is concerned

with only one of his duties, that of preaching.[1] The qualifications of the preacher that will be considered here may be divided into two groups; (a) those that are desirable, and (b) those that are essential.

One very desirable attribute is commanding appearance. Everything else being equal, the man of commanding appearance has a decided advantage over the man of less imposing appearance. The object of the preacher in his work is to inspire his group to increased devotion. If his presence wins their admiration it is all the easier for him to win acceptance from them for the ideals he seeks to impart. The practice, once almost universally followed by religious leaders, of wearing distinctive clothes that added to their dignity is founded on sound psychology. Every legitimate resource that increases prestige and thus power of suggestion should be used by those who seek to inspire and persuade.

Another very desirable qualification of the preacher is ability as an orator. If a speaker can by his vivid use of description, choice language, and impassioned manner sway his audience over to the side he wishes, it gives him a great advantage over one who lacks dramatic ability. This is true in an emphasized degree of the preacher, for success in his task of inspiring his audiences to a greater love for the noble and beautiful, difficult of attaining at best, is much more likely with than without the use of oratory.

A third desirable trait is a dignified manner. No man is fit to discourse on God, sin, salvation, and the meaning of life and death except a man of dignity. People do not like these subjects to be discussed with levity; certainly not in the case of one to whom they look for guidance.

[1] See Gardner, *Psychology of Preaching*, 291 ff.

They are convinced that the man who has sufficient wisdom in respect to these problems and appreciation of the solemnity of life to be their guide will by this very token be the possessor of dignity. Gardner states the common feeling when he says: "All the world feels contempt for the minister of religion who is given to levity. It is a sure sign that his character is shallow, and that he is simply incapable of perceiving and feeling the moral and spiritual significance of living."[2]

On the other hand, the preacher should not make the mistake of assuming too grave and pompous a manner. After speaking of the importance of a dignified bearing and an evident sense of the seriousness of life Gardner proceeds to warn the preacher against a gravity that is put on. "Such a manner and tone," he tells us, "are likely to become superficial and to indicate no longer real depth and sincerity of feeling; and when thus detached from reality they are ridiculous, if not disgusting and offensive, to those who are normally constituted." It is clear that the preacher needs to chart a careful course between levity and gravity. That, however, should not be difficult for the preacher who possesses the following characteristics.

In order that a preacher be successful he must be spiritual-minded and have a deep appreciation and reverence for the moral and spiritual nature of man. He who expects to impress upon his hearers the significance and worth of the spiritual phase of existence must himself have delved penetratingly into life and obtained flashes of insight into reality which will report themselves at once to others as true. Unless he has been visited by these

[2] *Ibid.*, 296.

glimpses of the divine he cannot hope in things spiritual to direct the thoughts of others aright.

Deep understanding and reverence for the spiritual nature of man are an inevitable result of these flashes of insight into reality. They impart a firm conviction in respect to the genuineness of man's spiritual aspirations and the high seriousness of his struggle for a higher life. Without this conviction no preacher can succeed. Imagine a cynic trying to muster the spiritual forces of a community and undertaking to strengthen and elevate them! An unwavering conviction in the very real existence of such forces must be present before one can go far in summoning them to occupy the dominant place in the life of an individual or of a community.[3]

In the second place, for success in preaching, a preacher must be as cultured as those whom he addresses. Hence his need of a broad liberal education. This need becomes very conspicuous when a preacher who clings to an outworn theology is called to address a congregation that has kept up in its theological thinking with the growing social idealism and best philosophical thought of the age. A man with a meager cultural background cannot touch at

[3] The office of the prophet has been beautifully described by Syed Ameer Ali. What he says of great religious leaders must be true of lesser ones, though not in the same degree. "But though unheard the voice of God has always sounded the call to truth, and when the time has arrived His servants have risen to proclaim the duties of man to himself and his Creator. These men have been the veritable 'messengers from heaven.' They came among their people as the children of their time; they represented the burning aspirations of the human soul for truth, purity and justice. Each was an embodiment of the spiritual necessities of his age; each came to purify, to reform, to elevate a degraded race, a corrupted commonwealth. Some came as teachers of a smaller culture to influence a smaller sphere; others came with a world message—a message not confined to one race or nation, but intended for all humanity" (*Life and Teachings of Mohammed*).

many points the lives of those of a broader culture. Yet that must be done if the spiritual and moral development of a congregation of this order is to be properly fostered.[4]

It is plain therefore that a minister may be successful with one congregation and fail with another. To the unlettered he may be a real spiritual leader and guide; his personality may put the impress upon them of an idealism hitherto unknown. But to well read people he may seem shallow and for them his idealism may fall flat. The unlettered he is able to lead and dominate but his meager cultural background unfits him to deal successfully with the well trained.

The Preacher and His Task. Broadly speaking we may say that the task of the preacher is to promote the religious life of his community. More specifically his job is to render conscious and strengthen the spiritual aspirations of his hearers; to reduce to order and system their religious concepts and beliefs; and to establish harmony between that system of religious concepts and their total world of experience. His task for purposes, of study, may be divided into three parts: (1) Instruction concerning spiritual realities; (2) Introducing law and order among beliefs and dealing with doubts; and (3) Spurring his hearers to greater loyalty and devotion to their highest ideals.

(1) *Instruction Concerning Spiritual Realities.* It is obvious that the preacher must have some personal knowledge of spiritual realities to start with. The two great authorities for the Christian minister are the Bible and the voice of conscience. Some attention therefore must be given here to the psychological processes involved in learning of spiritual truths from these sources; for both of them present great difficulties.

[4] *Cf.* Gardner, *op. cit.*, 90-91.

The difficulty of interpreting the Bible is not sufficiently appreciated, though a moment's reflection on the principle that the ease of understanding another or of making ourselves understood varies with the common fund of experience or background would reveal it. Understanding is easier between friends than between strangers. It is easier between members belonging to the same cultural group than between members of different groups. Ease of understanding varies also with subject matter. No serious failure of understanding crops up when talk is confined to such objective things as chairs and tables, or sports. But when talk interests itself in the things we feel most deeply, in some truth pertaining to man's spiritual nature, great difficulty arises in making ourselves understood even by our most intimate friends.

In turning to the Bible to discover spiritual truth, the knowledge sought is the kind of knowledge which is most difficult of communication. Yet the practice is common of crediting the writers of the Bible with an ability to express their spiritual knowledge so plainly that merely a passing glance may discover what they mean. Even if they belonged to our own culture this would be a very erroneous assumption. But their separation from us by wide differences in culture and language makes it even more so. Really to understand them knowledge must be secured, at least in a general way, of the social conditions, and especially the modes of thought and expression, of their age. With this equipment ease of understanding what the writers mean grows.[5]

After through such study it has at last been learned what the writer meant to his contemporaries, the problem has not yet been touched whether the truth in question will

[5] *Ibid.*, 56 ff.

be spiritually useful or elevating under present-day social conditions and modes of thought. For if anything has been made clear by the historical method of Bible study it is that man's grasp of truth has been progressive and his spiritual insight has grown. The inference is plain then that some parts of the Bible may be hard for us to accept. To give the preference to the ethics of Elijah over the teachings of Jeremiah and Amos would be an inexcusable moral and spiritual retrogression. Moreover, if growth has been the historical rule in the grasp of mankind on spiritual truth, there is no reason to suppose that this process has ceased. Hence, after the discovery of what the writers of the Bible meant to their contemporaries, that meaning in principle has still to be subjected to appraisal by the consciences of the devoted and spiritual men who are today seeking truth.

Ministers in general seem to act upon the foregoing as true though they do not explicitly avow it. Is it not common knowledge that they neglect some parts of the Bible and stress others because their consciences teach them to treat them thus differently? This must mean that their own ideals determine the value attached to the different parts of the Bible. It is good that this is so, but it would be better still if they were consciously aware of what they are doing; for then they would be more inclined to study closely the conditions which molded their ideals in the effort to understand to what extent they are to be trusted as guides. Conscience would no longer be taken as an infallible guide.

A clear understanding of the proper office of conscience and of its limitations is important to every preacher. Indeed all of us need to keep in mind that the dictates of conscience may or may not be in harmony with the will of God or with the spiritual truths we are seeking. Con-

science on its formal side was defined (Chapter II) as the feeling of obligation to act in accord with what we conceive to be right. This trait is universal and innate. But what men christen right varies with their environment and insight. And with the same facts before two neighbors different judgments may be reached. Hence many judgments of conscience cannot be right. Before conscience can be trusted we need to be certain that it embodies a proper set of values and that it has been educated by a diligent study of the problems pertaining to the act in question under present social conditions and modes of thought. Considerations such as these should warn the preacher against dogmatic assertions regarding the will of God.[6] Nonetheless preachers still with us do not hesitate to declare His will regarding the relations which should obtain between the nations, between the races, and between employer and employee. It is safe to say that many of them have never gone deeply into the problems of which they talk so dogmatically, or clearly envisaged how disastrous the consequences would be were their ideas embodied fully in the practices of man. God's will we may agree is that man should through struggle reach higher and higher levels; His will is that men should be animated with a love of their fellows. But the ways and means of advance, the ways and means by which love toward our fellows is to be expressed so as to make for the greatest good, are questions which must be carefully studied.

[6] Concerning dogmatism and intolerance Gardner says: "Intolerance has been a notable bane of the ministerial function in all ages. In this age particularly the preacher should be on his guard against it; for intolerance is especially offensive to men who live under modern conditions, which tend to develop the spirit of tolerance. No man can set himself up for an oracle now with the hope of impressing intelligent men with anything but his own egotism or fanatical folly" (*op. cit.*, 294).

And when they are treated as problems in this way there will be less dogmatism expressed and more helpful insights gained.

After the preacher has discovered truths regarding spiritual realities he has only made a beginning in his work of instruction. He has the difficult task left of acquiring skill in imparting his discoveries to others. The obstacles in his way need to be emphasized. His audience is usually a heterogeneous one, and yet he must talk to it as a whole on the most difficult subjects. What he says can be understood by any one hearer only to the extent that that particular hearer can assimilate it and relate it to his own experience. That is, he must so unfold the aspirations of man and so present a philosophy of life that he can be understood to a profitable extent by the adult and the child, the educated and the uneducated, the religious and the religiously indifferent. If he makes it simple, so that the child and the uneducated understand him better the critical adult and the intellectually alert adolescent are likely to find him too simple, tiresomely so. If he addresses himself to the cultured he is liable to speak a language and talk in terms that to the uncultured are a blank. If the layman appreciated the difficulties of talking to as many audiences as there are people present he would be more lenient when the preacher fails to describe spiritual truths in the language he himself would use to express them in. The cultured adult, for example, may frequently find statements made in the sermon with which he cannot personally agree. But he should remember that the preacher is not talking for his benefit only but for the benefit of a large number of others. That insight would induce him to redouble his efforts to detect the essential thought the preacher is trying to impart. This practice

would make the sermons a much more fruitful source of spiritual growth for him.

The difficulties of the preacher are inherent in the very nature of the learning process. It is doubtful, therefore, if they can ever be eliminated. Yet in the course of time the art of preaching has discovered more than one device which tends to cut them down. In the first place the dfficulty involved in establishing contact with the individuals composing a heterogeneous group is somewhat overcome by forming them into a psychological unit. This is done in part by getting the congregation to engage in group activities, such as singing, responsive reading, and repeating the creed; it is furthered still more by a use of symbolism familiar to all which brings to the fore-consciousness of each member much prized trains of religious thought. Through these means the members of the group for the time being are changed into a homogeneous mentality in that the same interest or attitude of mind dominates all.

Symbolism by serving as a means of creating a homogeneous mentality provides the preacher with a vehicle of expression that will be interpreted by his hearers in the light of all the religious insight which they possess. For instance, when God is spoken of as Father, while that expression is easily understood by the whole group, the content given to it differs with every individual present. "Father" does not mean the same to his child as it does to the father. Therefore the symbol "Father" means something different concerning God to the child from what it means to his father. But the one symbol calls up for both that view of God in which each takes the highest satisfaction. And so with other words such as "justice," "equality," "fraternity." Such words are symbols of group aspirations, and they serve to arouse in each of

the members composing an audience a train of ennobling sentiments, though the ideational content of these sentiments may vary greatly in different individuals. Yet through the use of such symbolism the preacher is able to appeal to the best in each member of his group.

It may be objected that such use of symbolism is not a form of instruction. This, however, is not true. The preacher does attempt to inform the symbolism used by him with more and more meaning. To succeed in this aim he must add content to it. Moreover apart from his deliberate effort to inform the symbolism with more meaning, it is enriched simply by bringing it to the fore of consciousness in company with the ideal aspirations of his audience. Under these conditions the mind is able through its own activity to add new meaning to its favorite symbols. Spontaneously the relevant insights which it has obtained from many sources form associations between the newly presented ideals and the older ideals and insights previously held. Thus, between the direct effort of the preacher and the spontaneous mental activity of the hearer, the symbols employed become richer in meaning and the religious education of the congregation is promoted.

The preacher is also greatly aided in his task of instruction by the atmosphere of respect and affection that usually exists between himself and his congregation. Anything that changes this attitude of good will and puts up barriers between him and those to whom he is speaking will make his hard task harder. Nothing will do this more quickly than controversy. And yet controversy is hard to avoid, since opinions and beliefs concerning religious matters are so highly charged emotionally that discussion concerning them very easily descends to controversy. Once controversy breaks out his chance of

being understood becomes slight indeed. It is hard enough for two people, when both seek to do so, to understand each other. But close their minds by antagonism and the desire of each to win the argument, and the difficulty becomes almost insurmountable. It is the same with preacher and people. If a preacher wishes his congregation to understand and be governed by what he says he must do everything possible to retain its respect and affection.

Introducing Law and Order among Beliefs and Dealing with Doubts. The importance of a working set of rightly coödinated beliefs, needs to be stressed, for emphasis on right action to which this age is so prone inclines it to neglect the whole subject of beliefs. The current ideal today is action, in spite of some signs of a recoil from its dictatorship. Salvation, it is endlessly repeated, is gained through service; beliefs or conceptions of the universe are said to be of little importance.

This attitude is based on a very superficial view of what constitute the determinants of human well-being. It jumps at the conclusion that human good need be little affected by what is believed regarding the nature of man and his universe. Yet an inquiry into the nature of perception or the determinants of judgment would show that this is false. Beliefs we all have regarding the nature of the universe and of man, and they make us sensitively receptive to things that correspond to them and blind to those that contradict them. Adopt the view that the universe is essentially mechanistic, the creation of man who is essentially a selfish egoistic animal an accident in the great interplay of atoms, and that view of reality closes the eye to much of the beauty and significance of life. On the other hand, conceive the universe teleologically and regard it as a great spiritual unity that puts an

impress of genuineness on man's moral aspirations in spite of his failures, and that view of reality makes its devotees sensitive to the beautiful and noble, and feeds their determination to make life realize all that they conceive it possible of becoming.

In urging the importance of a working set of rightly coördinated beliefs that add to the beauty and value of life, it is not to be understood that any piece of credulity which advertises to do this is desirable. Beliefs must be obtained and retained rationally if they are to make for the wholesome development of personality. Nothing can be more damaging to anyone than for him to crush his reverence and devotion to truth in order to believe that which is pleasant. The preacher above all others should stand for devotion to the truth. The martyrdom of giving up cherished beliefs when the evidence goes against them should be highly prized.

The task of the preacher, therefore, is to present beliefs in an intellectually acceptable form which will at the same time promote religious development. This means that he must take the view of the universe that is acceptable to reason in his age and extract inspiring and ennobling elements from it. There is no theory of the universe which cannot be used as the basis of an appeal to the finer and nobler qualities of man. It is not the preacher's task to delve deeper into the nature of the universe, but to come to the assistance of his hearers in building a philosophy of life on the conceptions of the universe held by the best minds of his age. Religious conceptions must not only be in harmony with the best account of the nature of reality, but they must also be consistent with one another. How necessary it is that concepts be mutually compatible was brought out in our discussion of the belief in God. The human mind cannot accept as true ideas

which contradict one another. The preacher must, therefore, present a theology that is internally consistent as well as in accord with our general knowledge regarding reality.

Dogmatic religions frequently find this double standard difficult to meet. Christianity is no exception. The beliefs that the preacher holds are determined in part by the theological and in part by the philosophical traditions of his group. The Christian minister at times finds these two traditions in conflict. Either he must turn his back on the philosophical tradition or change the dogma of the church so as to bring it in harmony with his philosophy. The latter is the desirable course, for in that way dogma is constantly enriched by the growing insight of man instead of becoming the dried husk of formerly living religious experiences. It is when the preacher regards himself as the defender of what he thinks its formulators understood a dogma to mean that he turns it into an instrument for maining the spiritual life of his hearers.

The preacher is greatly aided in his task of assisting his congregation to secure a working set of rightly coördinated beliefs by their desire to believe. Belief is not wholly determined by our logical faculties; its seat is frequently in the necessity of action, in the will, and in desire. A patriot, for instance, must continue to believe in the honor of his country in spite of incident after incident which stains its honor. He knows that at heart his country is sound. It has been misled. And so with the lover. He must believe in the honor of the beloved. Doubt on that point would be an intolerable state of mind. It is the same with those who are wedded to a religious view of reality. They must believe. Were any doubt to enter their minds that reality is essentially different from what they have conceived it, or that the things for which they have striven are after all worthless, their lives

would be torn from their moorings and set adrift. As such a state would be intolerable believing becomes a kind of necessity to them.[7] Love of righteousness and justice and yearnings for cosmic support force the acceptance of a view of reality that will justify and satisfy these feelings.

(3) *Spurring His Hearers to Greater Loyalty and Devotion to Their Highest Ideals.* In our study of doubt[8] one way pointed out of dealing with it was to supplant the desires and values of the doubter with more elevated ones. Supplanting lower ideals and values by higher is the meaning of inspiration as here used. To inspire its membership in this sense of the word is probably the function of chief importance in ethical religions. And religion does not leave this great task wholly to the preacher. It seeks to perform this function also through the use of music, prayers, and creeds. Nor is religion the only social agency engaged in this work. Society encourages the study of history and literature, employs motion pictures and sports, and stimulates patriotism by song and pageant in the effort to rally all its members to declare allegiance to the group ideals.

To inspire, as stated above, is to institute a change of allegiance from values of a lower to those of a higher order. This change may be brought about by fresh admiration of a quality in the hero incited by a motion picture, by an act of heroism performed in a game, by the joy experienced in complete forgetfulness of self in a moment of intense patriotism, by a beautiful song, or by a beautiful view. Anything which carries a man out of his

[7] *Cf.* Hocking, *Meaning of God in Human Experience,* 152.

[8] See previous account of the religious development of the adolescent.

narrow egoism and away from sensuous desires so that the fine things of life captivate him is an inspiration. It follows that the preacher in his effort to inspire must draw portraits of the finer elements in human nature and cite appealing examples that will stimulate more intelligent appreciation for them and stiffen resolution to let them shape life. In doing this he will find the use of suggestion very helpful. His work will not be so effective if he relies wholly on demonstration. It is difficult to prove that desire "A" is better and nobler than desire "B." The use of suggestion in winning assent is much more effective.

From what has already been said, it is obvious that the first step for the preacher to take in any fresh attempt to inspire his congregation is to bring their minds to a psychological focus. Various means of doing this, such as seating them elbow to elbow and doing things that get the group to respond as a whole, have been mentioned. As a supplement to what has been said on this point some appeals which the preacher can make that are effective in inducing a homogeneous state of mind in a crowd will now be presented.[9]

First to be considered is the appeal to fear. This use of that emotion is generally contemned, and it must be said that many of its effects upon crowds justify this attitude toward it. Yet the speaker will find that, by first voicing the fears of his audience and then coupling his assurances of safety with the necessity of group action, he can secure identity of interest and a high degree of group solidarity. The power of this motive to create a homogeneous mentality is seen in its influence on nations at war. Individual and class differences are forgotten in

[9] This account follows very closely Gardner, *op. cit.*, 254-59.

the effort to secure the common safety. It may also be used as a spur to stimulate greater zeal for the enforcement of law and righteousness in general. Fear that national well-being is endangered by prevailing disrespect for law may be an effective means of uniting group or community in a resolve to secure better law-enforcement.

Anger is another emotion which is a very effective means of welding a crowd together. Concerning it Gardner writes:

> This is one of the most powerful emotions, and all normal persons are capable of it, although there are great variations in the development of the pugnacious instinct among men. When a common hostile feeling against any object is aroused in a group of persons, its power to unify and blend them is unsurpassed. The heat of the anger which envelops them all melts them into conscious oneness, and the conscious unity is considerably strengthened by the sense of conflict with the person or persons against whom the hostility is directed; for conflict with an outside enemy is a very efficacious means of unifying the members of a group.

After calling attention to the danger of arousing anger carelessly he adds:

> But while its crude form is always demoralizing and the orator, especially the preacher, should rarely or never make an appeal to it, it may, nevertheless, like fear, be redeemed and transformed by being moralized, and thus converted into one of the noblest, most healthful and valuable of human feelings—indignation; and thus by continual association with our ethical principles may be organized into a senti-

ment of hatred, not for men, but for all conduct that is low and selfish. The development of this sentiment is one of the great tasks of the preacher. Even in this higher form the emotion of anger is a potent means of fusing a crowd; and the ability to stir the moral indignation of an audience has been a chief element of power of many great orators, and should be cultivated by all preachers."[10]

Appeals to the tender emotions are also a valuable means of bringing the minds of a crowd to a focus. Appeals to love of mother, love of Jesus, love of children seldom fail to unify a crowd. In addition they are also effective means of enlisting its support for ideals that are thought to make for child welfare, or for conduct which mother or Jesus would approve.

Appeals to love of liberty or to self-assertiveness also easily unify a crowd. And so do appeals to the love for the old. All of us are familiar with the power of appeals to the "ways of our fathers." Such appeals are usually employed in a conservative interest and exert a powerful influence. But skilful orators may use them in the interest of the new, or of an experimental attitude. Two orators speaking before the University of South Dakota referred to the founders of the American Government for the purpose of making opposite appeals. The one appeal was for the old and tried; the other for the courage to face our new conditions as manfully as they met their problems. According to the advocate of the old and tried, the Fathers of the Republic were wise men who created a government that has worked well, and the policy of isolation favored by them should be re-

[10] *Ibid.*, 255-6; see also Richardson, *Pedagogy of Anger*, and McDougall, *Social Psychology*, regarding value of anger.

spected and followed by us in virtue of their great wisdom and experience. According to the advocate of advance the Fathers of the Republic were men who were not afraid to face the new; they were bold and clear-sighted men, who looked conditions in the face and acted according to their own best judgment. Shall we, who are infinitely stronger as a nation, he asked, follow a policy that is less bold and daring? Shall we in the name of reverence for their acts prove ourselves false to their spirit of courage and adventure?

A psychological unification may also be created by singling out some particular interest and proceeding to make it dominant in each member of the crowd. After this has been done the task of winning acceptance for projects in line with that interest is easy. Skilful lecturers realize this and act accordingly. They first magnify and eulogize certain desires or sympathies until they dominate the audience. In the process the usual reflective attitude of cautious sitting in judgment is pushed aside. Proposals are then presented in line with the dominating interest in the foreground and they are readily accepted. Sometimes this ascendency is given to a particular emotion such as fear or anger or tenderness; sometimes to a particular project such as foreign missions; sometimes to a basic disposition such as modesty or self-denial. The last is very effective. Bring it about that an individual is no longer thinking primarily of self, or else thinking how unworthy he is of all the good things he enjoys, and he is in a mood to decide to make a sacrifice of which his ordinary full self would have been incapable. By isolating a given interest, emotion, or attitude and proceeding to make it dominant, and then presenting a proposal in line with it, the individual does not pass judgment on the proposal with his whole mind; rather the beam is tipped

by the sentiment that occupies the dominant position at the time in consciousness.

Perhaps a word of caution should be uttered regarding the psychological unification of groups and crowds and the use of suggestion by the preacher. The chief interest of the preacher is the building of moral character. That interest is not best forwarded by getting an individual to perform some praiseworthy act under his influence or under the influence of a crowd. Such an act is not sufficiently an expression of character, and may do little good or even some harm to the doer's moral development. The object in moral education is not to secure the acceptance of the good merely as the result of suggestion, or the performance of good acts so determined, but that real appreciation shall be obtained for the good in its own right and that the good acts performed shall truly reflect the doer's character. For this reason the process of the unification of a crowd may be carried to a white heat of intensity which is self-defeating. It puts all rationality and reflection in abeyance. The crowd then acts in response to motives not its own, and the reaction upon the personal morale of its units is likely to be bad. Solely interested as he is in obtaining the verdict and not in the welfare of the jurors, a lawyer may strain every effort to sweep them off their feet. But not so the preacher who is interested in the formation of an autonomous good character by his hearers. It is not victory on any terms that he wants but the conquest of a permanent attitude and disposition. This cannot be the product of emotional excesses. The emotional is valuable in the formation of character only when it is not carried to the extreme, and that danger is always present with a crowd.[11]

[11] *Cf.* Gardner, *op. cit.*, 84-86.

In trying to win acceptance for his ideals and values the preacher should be careful to arouse only feelings of use to him. If for instance a proposal that involves suffering and sacrifice is to be made, the satisfaction derivable from heroic and courageous decisions should be stressed. Moreover the preacher should be careful not to refer to irritating incidents or to use words that have offensive associations or an unpleasant sound. The more immersed his audience has been in his theme the more likely when the proposal or ideal is presented that it will be accepted by them.

There is another method open to the preacher and frequently employed by him in winning converts to his ideals. Attention has been called to the fact that human nature possesses impulses and wants that are rivals contending for the mastery. On the one hand are narrow, selfish desires for a life of physical ease and sensuous enjoyment; over against them are desires of a nobler sort. The individual who lets a less noble set dominate him cannot expel or silence his more noble impulses and wants. It is therefore impossible that a life of indulgence that puts lower selves first can be wholly satisfactory. Because his higher selves and ideal aspirations are thwarted, disappointments and regrets are inevitable. This provides the preacher with the opportunity to capitalize this "divine discontent" by using it to force a decision to abandon the lower life for the higher.

Summary. By way of summary I wish to describe one of the most effective sermons to which I have ever listened. It was addressed to young men at a Methodist revival. The preacher was a man of commanding appearance, the possessor of a fine voice. His impressive manner created the proper atmosphere for his sermon, which was entitled "The Game of Life." He first presented the seriousness of life due to the great stakes it offered,

and appealed to the ambition of his hearers to be among the winners. Since life is a game, he pointed out, in which no moves can be taken back care must therefore go into every move made to be sure that it is within the rules. Moreover like most other games the game of life requires team work. It cannot be played alone. The coöperation of others and the leadership of a good captain are necessary. This part of the sermon was well illustrated with many thrilling descriptions of the heroic acts of athletes and especially of captains of teams. This prepared his audience for the heart of his sermon—Jesus is the Good Captain. Again fresh incidents were cited to evoke admiration for the devotion and courage shown by noted captains in athletic contests. The parallel with the courage and devotion of Jesus was then driven home and the plea made that loyalty to the Good Captain be shown by his hearers by enlisting under His banner and living courageously as men. By so doing success in the great game of life would be assured. At the close of this sermon forty-five young men pledged themselves to make Jesus their Captain.

Careful analysis will prove that this sermon embodied practically all the principles described in the present chapter. Psychological unification was first created by bringing to the fore of consciousness a common interest, namely, athletic contests and the eagerness of the members of a team for success. (This psychological unification had already been largely achieved by the preliminary service.) This brought the ideals of loyalty and devotion and the admiration of courage and strength to the front ready to hand for use in making his plea for enlistment under the banner of the Good Captain. By the skilful use of suggestion he ferried his audience across from the ideals that already had a strong hold on its members to the ideals he wished it to embrace.

Chapter XI

ASCETICISM

Definition. Asceticism and ritual sacrifice are very close kin. When the religious devotee gives up burning a sacrifice in order to win back the favor of his deity or as a thank offering for a piece of good fortune and places certain restrictions or interdicts upon himself as tokens of his penance and devotion he becomes an ascetic. Such practices of voluntary restraint need not be motivated by religious interests. Frequently they result from the desire to stimulate moral development through the exercise of self-control. We should not be surprised, therefore, that such practices of discomfort and self-punishment are to be found at all cultural levels. In the higher religions these acts of devotion have been largely substituted for ritual sacrifice. This is as we should expect. Once the god of the group changes character and becomes an ethical deity his devotees naturally begin to recognize that they cannot please him longer by an offering of goods. The price of his favor now is the moral development of the individual and must be won by righteous living and constant practice in moral tasks that test and strengthen the individual. With this brief word of introduction we may risk the following definition: Asceticism is the voluntary practice of suffering, toil, or renunciation for the purpose of securing the favor of deity or of stimulating the moral development of the individual.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Hardman, *The Ideals of Asceticism*, 16.

Present Unpopularity of Asceticism. Asceticism is in popular disfavor today. There are several reasons for this. In the first place through deficient knowledge of its true aim and nature it is too frequently associated with the abnormal if not pathological. And it must be admitted that the number of pathological cases in any census of ascetics is great. But to take these as typical or as fair examples of asceticism and its true aim and nature is unscientific and unfair. Judging asceticism on the basis of the pathological cases collected by James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* is as unwarrantable as to judge love on the basis of the pathological cases collected by the psychoanalysts. Yet asceticism stands condemned in the eyes of many on just this ground, that it carries the names of some of these extreme cases on its rolls. The value of studying the extreme forms is recognized. They put the motives and ideals which animate the ascetic as it were under a magnifying glass. But unless care is taken slips will be made and conclusions that apply to pathological forms be assumed to apply also to normal. A pathological bias may thus arise that will make it hard or impossible to reach a true understanding of asceticism or to make a just evaluation of it.

Another reason for the unpopularity of asceticism is that its social value is not apparent at first sight. In this day of emphasis on social service, of doing something for the community, asceticism in circles which consider it a passive and selfish attitude is naturally in disrepute. "Up and doing" is the policy approved. Too much time and energy must not be spent on the gymnastic of the inner life. Society must be served. This attitude betrays great ignorance concerning the full aim and scope of the ascetic life. To be sure, the ascetic does spend a great deal of time in self-discipline, but the normal ascetic does this

like an athlete in training or a virtuoso in his finger exercises, that he may better fit himself for the tasks of life. It must be admitted, however, that ascetics have numbered many in their ranks who seemed unconcerned with an active life of usefulness. Many have seemed so completely absorbed in their own salvation and spiritual growth that the means which they employed for this purpose became an end in itself. But this again is not expertness but incompetency. It is not typical asceticism.

A third reason why modern opinion looks with disfavor on asceticism is the premium put upon expression by biological psychology. It has taught our generation to believe that all inherited impulses are good, and that the good life is the one of maximum expression. The attitude in favor of self-expression so engendered has been strengthened by another powerful movement in psychology, namely, the psychoanalytic. Psychoanalysts cry out against the great dangers of repression and point to mental disorders of all kinds induced by repressing our desires. They tell us that a repressed impulse is driven into the unconscious where it does untold mischief by acting as though it were bent on destroying the mental unity of its victim. The inference drawn is that the abolition of all repression would be an unmixed blessing. The uncritical then jump to the conclusion, that every impulse must be expressed or that its expression is permissible. But asceticism counsels just the reverse of this recommendation to orgies of self-indulgence. It is an ideal of development through self-imposed denial, endurance, and repression.

Asceticism continues to be practiced in spite of widespread modern disapproval. Every religion adjures its devotees to impose restraints upon themselves. This is not surprising, for the seeds of the ascetic disposition are

deeply implanted in human nature, biological psychology to the contrary notwithstanding. Man does not seek the easy at all times and places; difficult and painful tasks that really provide a test of his mettle appeal to him on occasion. Moreover, the existence of society depends upon the practice of putting the self to the rear. As Durkheim points out, society demands sacrifices; it insists at times upon conduct counter to the desire for the easy and the pleasurable; for only on the condition that we "do violence to our instincts" and are prepared "to ascend the decline of nature" can we fulfill our duties toward it.[2] It is no accident, therefore, that the emphasis of asceticism on repression plays an important part in religion. Human nature and social necessity combine to urge religion to endorse it, and religion in seeking the moral development of its devotees finds in asceticism a valuable discipline.

Moreover, the emphasis in asceticism on putting the self to the rear is supported by something deeper than social necessity, or even human nature. The chief biological interest of the universe is in higher and higher forms. How else account for the evolutionary movement as a whole? This driving force behind the upward march of life is not greatly concerned with the comfort or the longevity of the individual. Indeed it is frequently hard on him. It is intent solely, it would seem, on the upward movement of life in general. But a force that is characteristic of life in general must exist in the living individual. This means that in the individual there is an urge which causes him to neglect self and if need be to inflict pain and sacrifice on himself in order that the ends of the species may be protected or advanced. Many a struggle, of course, goes on between the narrower per-

[2] *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* 316.

sonal interests of the individual and the interests of the species to which he belongs. Yet the interests of the species frequently so predominate in practice that narrow personal interests are almost forgotten.[3]

In the study of asceticism which follows, the student should attempt to free himself of any prejudice he may have brought to it and see its emphasis on repression not only as an ideal demanded by society but as inevitable when the force expressed in the upward movement of life demands that the individual forego his ease and comfort for the attainment of life's extra-personal ends. A sympathetic study of it will do much to broaden and deepen our understanding of human nature.

Description of Ascetic Practices. The discipline to which athletes and soldiers are subject is closely akin to that of asceticism. "The word 'asceticism' looks back to the arduous physical training that was undertaken by Greek athletes and warriors, and recalls that people's high appreciation of perfect bodily development and their admiration for unusual powers of physical endurance. In its original form it denoted the process of self-training for these things by restraint and exercise."[4] Non-athletes may also seek to become strong and hard by the self-infliction of some sharp discomfort and pain. This is the key to the appeal of practices like cold baths, swimming in icy water, and going with head bare in the dead of winter. The principle recognized seems to be that a bit of self-imposed discomfort is good for one; it makes one more a man. In primitive tribes the self-infliction of hardships and suffering seems to be motivated by a desire to display courage and fortitude as well as to become

[3] *Cf.* Bergson, *Creative Evolution,* 128.

[4] Hardman, *op. cit.,* 1.

hard physically. The worker who thrusts aside all diversions in order that he may the better carry through some great task is also something of an ascetic. As Hardman says:

> Other interests are ruthlessly thrust aside and the whole manner of ordering the life has regard only to the dominant purpose. Extreme hardship and costly deprivation are willingly accepted, if only they contribute to the achievement of the end in view. A passion for mastery combines with the pressing needs of man's life to make this kind of asceticism not uncommon; it would probably be true to say that it has figured prominently in the conduct of all who have successfully accomplished a serious purpose in life.[5]

Our application of the word asceticism to the restraints athletes and serious workers impose upon themselves is legitimate. Certainly it helps toward a true understanding of asceticism. Yet the commoner use of the word employs it in the sense of restraints self-imposed in the interest of moral and religious development. The man who gives up all forms of pleasure for an ambition other than that of moral and spiritual growth like getting rich, may in all outward respects be as ascetic as any hermit seeking salvation, but he is not usually called an ascetic. Hence this study of asceticism will confine itself to attempts to gain some spiritual good through voluntary denial and restraint. All the practices described below are motivated by this interest.

(1) One very common ascetic practice is fasting, a religious rite observed in all parts of the world. Perhaps

[5] *Ibid.*, 2.

modern Protestantism is the only religion that has not encouraged it use. In many primitive societies the young man has to live for a long time on as little food as possible as part of his initiation. The practice of giving up a particular article of food or a certain beverage is widespread today. There are also special seasons or days set aside for fasting.[6]

(2) Close confinement is another ascetic practice. To shut oneself off from the world completely is regarded as an aid to more intense concentration upon spiritual development. Hence ascetics have spent long periods in narrow quarters such as a cave, or a cell, or a tomb and never once put their heads outdoors.

(3) Denying oneself a bath or clean quarters has also been looked upon as a means of spiritual growth. Many of the world's famous ascetics refused to bathe, in obedience to their conviction that the flesh must be mortified. It must not be shown any mercy or given the creature comfort a bath produces.

(4) Giving up recreation and pleasures of all sorts such as cards, sports, and the theater as a means of moral discipline has also often been done. So has a life of isolation been chosen to thwart and circumvent the gregarious interests.

(5) Forms of deprivation such as giving up wealth, or a life of extreme poverty by choice lacking in various comforts such as soft beds and chairs, comfortable clothing, and warm houses, have appealed to some as profitable ways in which to put self to the rear.

(6) Continence in sex relations has been highly valued as signal proof of the victory of the spirit over the flesh.

(7) Voluntary enlistment for service in the slums, in

[6] The description here given of ascetic practices follows closely Hardman, *op. cit.*, 10-13.

leper colonies, in infectious hospital wards has exercised a powerful appeal as a discipline tributary to moral growth. The desire to make surrender complete and to humble oneself in the dust has at times led to practices which smack of the pathological.

> St. Francis of Assisi embraced the lepers and kissed them; Margaret Mary Alacoque, St. Catherine, Charlotte Laporte (known as "the sucker"), Francis Xavier, St. John of God, and others "are said to have cleansed the sores and ulcers of their patients with their respective tongues; and the lives of such saints as Elizabeth of Hungary and Madame de Chantal are full of a sort of revelling in hospital purulence, disagreeable to read of, and which makes us admire and shudder at the same time." Nothing could be more humiliating than incidents of this kind.[7]

(8) Total abstinence from all expressions of anger, of irritation, and all forms of ambitious self-seeking has been the way of self-discipline preferred by others. The self must be kept under a strict government which shall at all times retain the upper hand over passion of all sorts.

(9) Self-imposed infliction of pain is a widespread ascetic practice. In primitive groups the torture which the candidates for religious honors inflict on themselves is extreme; but nowhere do we find more excruciating forms than those which the Christian ascetics have inflicted upon themselves.

> In the attempt to discipline the body or to purge it from evil by the infliction of pain, ill-regulated zeal and the incitement of rivalry sometimes unite to pro-

[7] Cutten, *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, 125.

duce an astounding variety of savage practices. The poor body is tortured and mutilated in brutal fashion; and there is little doubt that these revolting practices are commonly allowed to distract our attention from the less ferocious aspects of asceticism, and are mainly responsible for the prejudice that attaches to the term in the minds of many people. The body is clothed with hair shirts, with nail-studded belts, and with massive iron chains dragging heavy weights; the feet are shod with shoes bristling inside with pointed nails; the whole body is laid out on a bed of thorns or of iron spikes; the soles of the feet are torn by progress over sharp flints, or burnt by live charcoal; small fires are lighted in a circle around the body, or it is made to swing before a fire while the tropical sun blazes overhead; the body is suspended head downwards from a tree for perhaps half an hour, or it is swung up by hooks fastened into the flesh; long pilgrimages are performed by painful modes of progression; standing upright is tabued for years together; a stream of water is allowed to trickle on the head; the head is violently beaten against a wall until it bleeds profusely; thick metal skewers are run through the tongue, the cheeks, and various parts of the body; flagellation and blood-letting are practiced with every degree of severity; the body is branded, cut with knives, and mutilated; the skull, the teeth, the ears, and the feet, are deformed; the hand is clenched until it becomes useless; the nails making their way through the flesh between the bones of the hand; an arm is tied to a bamboo support and kept erect overhead until it withers and becomes rigid; and as a climax, the

body is buried alive for periods extending from a few days to five or six weeks.[8]

(10) The ascetic also wishes to sever himself free from every human tie. His natural love for parents, children and relatives is battered down[9] on the theory that severing the ties of affection proves him to be master of himself just as does the conquest of passion and sensuous desire. Only from this point of view are we able to understand how so many saints could abandon their parents and relatives. They felt that fidelity to a life devoted to the worship of God and to the improvement of their souls demanded it of them. St. Jerome, in the following message to Heliodorus urging him to become a hermit, voices this ideal:

> Though your little nephew twine his arms around your neck; though your mother, with disheveled hair and tearing her robe asunder, point to the breast with which she suckled you; though your father fall down on the threshold before you, pass on over your father's body. Fly with tearless eye to the banner of the cross . . . Those around you may tell you that all the household rests on you. Such chains as these, the love of God and the fear of hell can easily break.[10]

The account now given of ascetic practices makes it apparent that they display not only a great diversity in kind but a wide range in degree. Sometimes asceticism is little more than the desire to put one's own strength to the test, and to add to it somewhat by the practice of

[8] Hardman, *op. cit.*, 12-13.

[9] See Moses, *Pathological Aspects of Religions*, 242 f.

[10] Quoted from Moses, *op. cit.*, 34-5.

self-control. Other ascetics inflict tortures upon themselves which seem to the ordinary man unendurable; they starve to death all the natural desires; and they do violence to all their humanitarian impulses and sentiments. And their own explanation is that they feel that these things are demanded of them to stimulate the development of their souls or to put them into more favorable relations with God.

Sources and Motives of Asceticism. The motives and sources of asceticism, which are many, may conveniently be divided into two classes—those predominantly impulsive or instinctive, and those predominantly conceptual. No claim is made that a given ascetic practice is confined to one source or the other, and in some cases there may be disagreement as to which element, the impulsive or conceptual, predominates. Nonetheless this principle of division seems a natural one, and it is thought that the following classification based upon it will be found acceptable.

(1) *Sources that are Predominantly Instinctive.* We mean in saying that a source is predominantly instinctive that it is lodged in strata embedded in human nature beneath the strata laid down by social training and the intervention of ideals and beliefs.

(a) Ascetic practices may arise from violent experiences of grief. This origin is foreshadowed in expressions of grief found at times in the lower animals. When separated from her calf the mother cow may refuse to eat and show other unmistakable signs of grief. Wild animals may do the same when denied their freedom. A man in great grief behaves likewise. He imposes restrictions upon the ordinary mode of living. Great grief may lead to the self-infliction of tortures in primitive groups. Mild examples still persist even among us. A

miser who loses his money tries to tear his hair out by the roots; a family which has lost one of is members lets out shriek after shriek; the young girl disappointed in love rips her handkerchief to ribbons. In time an instinctive emotional response may become conventionalized. When this happens violent grief has given rise to a form of asceticism.[11]

(b) Asceticism may be embraced as a reaction from a life of sensuous indulgence. Human nature as before stated may be conceived as possessed of two sets of interests. On the one hand is its urge to power, to strength, to courage, to freedom, and the assertion of mastery; on the other hand its desire for a life of sensuous enjoyment and ease. A perfect balance between these two sets of interests is hard to maintain. Most of us waver back and forth, swinging from one extreme to the other. Cases have been known of very strict characters, or ascetics, suddenly throwing all restrictions aside and giving themselves up "to the flesh and the devil." On the other hand, libertines in recoil sometimes fly to the opposite extreme of a life of asceticism. Disappointment and disillusionment have been their pay from the pursuit of pleasure. Its tang is gone and it turns to bitterness. A vivid portrayal of this recoil can be found in two recent novels, *Erik Dorn* by Ben Hecht and *Cytherea* by Hergesheimer. This reaction at times becomes epidemic and assumes the proportions of a great cultural movement. As Moses says:

> What is true of individuals is largely true of groups. It was in the dying days of Egypt, Judea, Greece, and Rome, when their glorious courses had been run and their energies dissipated, when repent-

[11] *Cf.* Hopkins, *Origin and Evolution of Religion,* 159.

> ant disgust which "deep weariness and sated lust" breed in men and make of life a hell had set in, that the various sects such as the Essenes, Cynics, Stoics, Gnostics, Manicheans, Docetae, Montanists, and others were born and developed. And it was, as we should expect, the most learned and licentious centers of these lands that produced the most numerous ascetics, just as the cultivated cities of France and Germany today are breeding centers of pessimism and despair, vice and suicides. Truly, the race is but a pendulum which slowly swings between a smile and a tear.[12]

(c) Social decay is a source and breeder of asceticism. That this is so was suggested in the above quotation from Moses. When men no longer feel that the good life receives proper backing from the state or society and that they no longer merit their devotion and service, an individual here and there begins to withdraw from it and turn within for his salvation. Frequently this emergency leads them to exalt self-control, self-mastery, self-sufficiency. When this attitude gains sufficient ascendancy ascetic practices inevitably follow, for they satisfy as none other the demand for demonstrations of self-control and mastery.

(d) Desire to atone may be a source of asceticism. Instances of the necessity of making atonement occurs outside of the strictly religious world. A woman who had been in a railway accident sued the railroad. After she had won a large verdict she began to suffer pain but when an operation was performed it was discovered that there was nothing the matter with her and she made a speedy recovery. What happened was this: the opera-

[12] *Ibid.*, 238-9.

tion had served as a penance in her case for getting money to which she did not feel entitled.[13] Only recently the newspapers reported a case of suicide by a small boy after he had inflicted an injury upon another boy. He felt driven to take his life by the demands that he made upon himself to atone for the injury he had done. The self-demands to atone may not take the extreme forms which they did in the above cases. The little boy who has disobeyed his mother may resolve to be especially good for a while in order to atone for what he has done. The lover may resolve to atone for his infidelity by being all the truer and more devoted in the future. Likewise the religious devotee who has not been true to his God resolves to atone for his misdeeds by placing more and more stringent regulations on his behavior. All these are cases where the individual responds to a given situation with an unreflective reaction of suffering and self-denial to regain mental peace and equilibrium.

(e) The pleasure derivable from suffering has undoubtedly been one source of ascetic practices. This may take two forms: (1) pleasure in the suffering of others and (2) pleasure in one's own suffering. The first form is known as sadism and the second as masochism.

Since asceticism is voluntary or self-imposed restriction and suffering, sadism, or pleasure in the torment or torture of others, can only operate indirectly. How it operates can be discovered from the initiatory rites of primitive groups. As Hopkins points out, the pleasure of the older men at the evident suffering causes them to egg on the initiates to increased tortures. "It is not all desire to increase the victim's *mana,* any more than the Sophomore is wholly altruistic in desiring to make the

[13] White, *Principles of Mental Hygiene,* 55.

Freshman worthy of his new state."[14] Cruelty, that is, sadism then is in part responsible for the suffering the young initiates inflict upon themselves. They give their consent, but the controlling suggestion comes from the elder members of the group.

It is to be feared that men in more cultured groups likewise get pleasure in imposing restraints, if not suffering, on youth. Concerning this, Swisher writes:

> It may seem strange, but churches are full of this type; long-faced saints who would deprive the young of innocent amusement, and who see harm in the most harmless of youthful diversions . . . It is their pleasure to deprive others of everything which might make them happy. How utterly selfish their philosophy of life is they cannot realize, for they are pathological individuals who, from no fault of their own, have been made to see life in somber hues; they are the misogynists, the pessimists, the cynics. Let us look upon them with charity, for they are not to blame for their condition and their lives are desperately unhappy.[15]

Swisher is a bit too severe on the men he condemns so harshly and also undoubtedly exaggerates in saying that the churches are full of them. But when all allowance has been made there remains a measure of truth in his statement. Ascetic practices and inhibitions are not only encouraged but also enforced upon youth by those in power out of jealousy and envy of the enjoyment which youth can get out of pleasures from which they are shut out by age.

[14] *Op. cit.*, 158; see also Durkheim, *op. cit.*, 313.

[15] *Religion and the New Psychology*, 119-120.

As for masochism, or perverted pleasure in inflicting pain on oneself, it seems certain that this practice must have been carried to great lengths by many ascetics. Since Masochism is a human trait, as is proved by the great number of people who have sought to inflict torture upon themselves, it becomes reasonable to believe that it has been a cause in at least some instances of fanatical allegiance to asceticism.

(f) The Stoic impulse to be free through self-mastery from the petty annoyances of life is one of the most important sources of asceticism. To remain unperturbed by accidents and disappointments, in control of his appetites and his aversion to pain a man must be able to go counter to ways marked out by his native likes and dislikes. Young boys, when they stick pins in themselves or subject themselves to other painful ordeals, seem implicitly to be acting on this principle. They prove their possession of nerve in this way. Children for the same reason when punished sometimes refuse to cry. Similarly an overpowering impulse will seize the adult to demonstrate his control of his likes and dislikes, and thus prove to himself his freedom from their dictation. The man who cannot control his desires for pleasure or aversions to pain is not free but their slave. Moreover the fact seems to be sensed that through the exercise of such control increments of self-development take place.

The prevalence of self-inflicted pain and deprivation as a test of manhood that displays endurance and adds to strength of character would seem to indicate that man has generally recognized that the price of freedom from animal bondage, the price of becoming a self or a personality, is to do violence to his passions and appetites. As long as he lets them dominate he is in bondage as are other animals. In some men the passion for this freedom

has been sufficiently strong to impel them to demonstrations of self-mastery at the cost of inconceivable hardship and pain. As Plato, Spinoza, and Hegel looked upon reason as divine and strove their hardest to set it free, so the ascetic has looked upon self-mastery as life's first prize and felt no price too high to pay for this freedom. That is why he seeks it at all costs, and why again his happiness when he has attained it is so supreme that the tears of sympathy over his ordeals of pain shed by those who lack understanding seem maudlin to him.

(g) Imitation is a source of asceticism. Ascetics have frequently bound themselves together in fraternities or orders as was done by the monks of medieval Europe. As the youth who is down almost to his last penny joins the army or navy as the readiest way out of his troubles, so large numbers of people flocked to the monasteries as the readiest cure for the nausea with the life they had been leading. The force of social contagion drew still others who would not have been attracted to the ascetic ideal otherwise.[16] Flagellation is another illustration of the influence of imitation or group contagion on ascetic practices. Writing of this movement Cutten says:

> In 1260 bands of people in Italy were seized with a craze for public scourging, and were called Flagellants. A remorse for sin and a belief that blood shed in self-flagellation had a share with the blood of Christ in atoning for sin were the bases of the movement. Both men and women went in groups from town to town, and, stripped to the waist, or with but a loin cloth about them, they stood in public places and scourged one another, at the same time singing and exhorting the bystanders . . .

[16] See Cutten, *op. cit.*, Chapter XII.

> The second main outbreak appeared in 1349, directly following the Black Death . . . In 1414 there was a fresh outbreak, and, although they appeared occasionally afterward, history does not mention them after 1544. It is affirmed that they numbered sometimes as many as ten thousand, and included persons of the highest rank.[17]

Here as in the case of other movement which reach this size and character many of the onlookers were seized by an irresistible impulse to become members of the group.

(2) *Sources that are Predominantly Conceptual.* To this group have been assigned the sources of asceticism that are rooted largely in intellectual beliefs and theories.

(a) Asceticism may be an outgrowth of a consuming belief that God is cruel. This source of ascetic practices is more active in groups advanced in culture than in primitive ones. While men in primitive groups do inflict tortures upon themselves at the grave of a great chief in order as they think to please him, the self-infliction of torture to appease an angry spirit is more general in more advanced societies. Read the cruelties devout men have practiced on themselves and their relatives and friends in order to win the goodwill of God and the wonder is how they came to conceive that God would be pleased by such suffering. Here are a few of the cruel acts committed by pious men to please God, reported by Moses:

> St. Poemen and his six brothers had all deserted their mother to cultivate the perfections of an ascetic life. But ingratitude can seldom quench the love of a mother's heart, and the old woman, now bent with infirmities, went alone into the Egyptian desert to see

[17] *Ibid.*, 157-8.

> once more the children she had so dearly loved. She caught sight of them as they were about to leave their cell for the church, but they immediately ran back into the cell, and before her tottering steps could reach it, one of her sons rushed forward and flung the door in her face. She remained outside weeping bitterly. St. Poemen then, coming to the door, but without opening it, said, "Why do you, who are already stricken with age, pour forth such cries and lamentations?" But she recognizing the voice of her son, answered, "It is because I long to see you, my sons. What harm could it do you that I should see you? Am I not your mother? Did I not give you suck? I am now an old and wrinkled woman, and my heart is troubled at the sound of your voices." The saintly brothers, however, refused to open their door. They told their mother that she would see them after death; and the biographer says that she at last went away contented with the prospect.[18]

This is not an isolated case. The belief in the efficacy of suffering in winning the approval of God has deeply colored all Christian thought. Why men should so think of God and suffering is not easy to answer. Perhaps they were greatly impressed with the enormous amount of evil, suffering and pain round about them. They knew that they made those with whom they were displeased suffer as roundly as possible. This may have led them to credit God with a similar reaction. Perhaps many of them were guilty of a love of cruelty which again they projected into their conception of God. Whatever the

[18] *Op. cit.*, 242; Moses quotes from Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, 133.

explanation, it is clear that when God is conceived of as cruel or as subject to anger, disasters such as tornadoes, earthquakes, pestilence, etc. will become a fruitful source of self-inflicted torture, because such events are then taken as signs of God's disapproval and it is considered necessary in order to stay the wrath of God for men to make themselves suffer severely. One of the epidemics of flagellation, referred to above, seems to have had its source in the plague of Black Death.

> Even now, there are some who consider a national calamity a visitation from God, who has been angered, and needs therefore to be appeased . . . When adversity of any kind overwhelms him, man either curses God and spitefully throws all rules and morals to the wind, or hastens to Him, and with shaved head and in sackcloth and ashes, falls upon the ground and supplicates His mercy. Poor worm of the dust: when we remember his utter helplessness against the forces of nature, and his profound ignorance of their *modi operandi,* we cannot but sympathize with the frantic and irrational means he takes to insure himself against them.[19]

The belief that the world is soon to end combined with the conception of God as cruel is a fruitful source of asceticism. This point needs no elaboration. If God is going soon to put an end to the world because of its wickedness, a God so highly displeased that out of the body of humanity only the few will be saved who succeed in winning his favor by signal proofs of sorrow that they have angered him, obviously believers will become

[19] Moses, *op. cit.,* 254.

more zealous than ever in imposing upon themselves restraints and tortures in their most acute forms.

(b) Another source of asceticism is a belief that it is a means of higher spiritual contact. Men at all levels of culture have imposed restraints upon their ordinary selves to enable them, as they thought, to enter into fuller participation in the religious activities and ideals of their group. One such practice very general, if not universal, that of fasting, may have originated by accident. It may well have been that periods of hunger or starvation were frequent when the struggle for life was intense, at which time there was never any great accumulation of food. Now men faint with hunger are very likely to experience trances and to have visions. Frequently their contents are very pleasant. At times they are construed as a revelation from the spirit world and thereafter they are voluntarily sought in order to gain revelations. Hence in primitive tribes the young men about to be initiated go into the woods for a period of fasting and meditation hoping that they will be favored with a vision from the spirit world.[20]

Reference has already been made to the ascetic severities practiced by a member of primitive society who aspires to become a shaman or medicine man. Writing of these Hardman says:

> In order to attain that degree of intimacy with the gods and power over the spirits which is necessary for their work, they must commonly spend a prolonged, period sometimes lasting for years, in seclusion, during which they practice bodily discipline with the utmost severity. By this means they become godlike in their own estimation and in the

[20] *Ibid.*, 238; also Hardman, *op. cit.*, 98.

> eyes of the people, and, assisted by the regard of those who credit them with the possession of supernatural power, they believe themselves to be in a permanently sympathetic relationship with the spiritual powers to whom by their own exertions they have assimilated themselves.[21]

The same motives operate at higher cultural levels. It is through solitude and fasting that the especially devout still seek to come into closer intimacies with the spiritual world. For the theist this obviously takes the devotee over the labyrinthine course that ends in direct contact with God; for the pantheist, such as the Neo-Platonist or the Brahman, the goal sought is to be reabsorbed into the Absolute. In both cases the start toward the goal is made by accepting two of the cardinal points of the ascetic ideal: (a) the necessity of living above bodily appetites and passions; and (b) the necessity of long periods alone with oneself so that contemplation of the supreme mysteries may go on undisturbed. For the pantheist of the above order the necessity of freeing himself from slavery to the last ounce of desire is more absolute than for the theist. The reason is obvious. The theist centers all desire on direct communion with God and is partially rewarded on the way; the pantheist in cultivating indifference to everything is only rewarded at the end of the journey when he has become so entirely indifferent that self by fading away into the Absolute can be transcended.

(c) Another source of asceticism is belief in its efficacy as a means of freeing the body from demonic influence. It has been pointed out that fasting is responsible for a variety of accompanying psychological changes. Where

[21] *Op. cit.*, 80.

evil desires and impulses are thought to be due to the influence of demons, it is natural that a fasting ritual should develop for the purpose of exorcising them. Certain practices of the Neo-Pythagoreans seem to have been in part so motivated.[22] The thought still persists in some Christian circles that desires of the flesh are of the devil, and therefore should be crushed.

(d) Belief in a sharp antagonism between body and soul is a source of ascetic practices. The soul would feign live a life in the realm of ideas and of eternal truth and beauty. But its aspirations are checked or well-nigh defeated by the senses and passions. Hence the conclusion is drawn by some that the soul is imprisoned in the body and that it can only free itself by imposing upon the senses and passions all sorts of restraints and privations. This is the attitude toward the body in the mind of Plato when he makes Socrates say that the philosopher's quest is death; for only in death can the soul become fully free to resume the life of purity and perfect knowledge that was its estate before it became incarnated in the body.[23] When the body and its relation to the soul are so conceived men who take the task of living seriously naturally attempt to free themselves from slavery to the senses and passions by the assiduous use of the most vigorous ascetic practices.

(e) Social corruption regarded as an outgrowth of prosperity and luxury is another source of asceticism. From time to time the inequalities and maladjustments in society become so oppressive that picked men begin to feel that culture is the source of the evils suffered by the underprivileged. Hence the plea, "back to nature," arises.

[22] *Ibid.*, 34.

[23] *Phaedo*, 67-68.

It is felt that if men would only voluntarily drop the luxurious habits and expensive tastes and appetites of a too prosperous civilization and live simply, as it is imagined men lived before corruption by wealth and culture were possible, these evils would disappear. In eras when this conviction of social decadence permeates society some heroic souls have always attempted to put this theory into practice. The Cynics are the best known instance.[24] The Cynics were deeply impressed with the social evils of their day. They were also deeply impressed with that side of the teachings of Socrates which emphasized the ideal of self-sufficiency. Hence they undertook to sever themselves from the conventions, luxuries, and comforts which were undermining the independence and self-control of so many of their contemporaries. To reëstablish and entrench the mastery of the spirit they lived a life of great privation, and thus showed to a world bent on pleasure that some men at least found a keener bliss in a totally different life.

(f) Intellectual scorn of the feelings is another source of asceticism. This motive was mildly present in the Cynics. It reached, its clearest expression however, in their offspring, the Stoics. The Stoics pictured the universe as under universal law. They subscribed to a doctrine of thoroughgoing determinism. The only latitude allowed to man was the choice between bearing what fate brought with courage or cowardice; between resignation to what universal law was doing to him or a policy of impotent fighting against it. Man, they held, is totally unable to change the course of events, but he is complete master over what his reactions to them shall be. Hence

[24] I refer here, of course, to the school founded by Antisthenes, a follower of Socrates, rather than to "cynics," in the more common meaning of the term.

he should school himself to abstain from emotional responses of all sorts; he must cultivate a scorn of the feelings; he must find his peace and the worth of existence not in reluctant or half-hearted acceptance of, but in high-hearted consent to all the workings of universal law. By so doing he becomes immune to the ups-and-downs of fortune, since whatever happens must be the portion decreed for him by universal law and therefore in accord with his supreme value. Thus the Stoic developed a supreme indifference to the pull of all the feelings and emotions, and also a scorn, it must be admitted, toward those who were unable to develop the same attitude of freedom and independence.[25]

(g) The desire to suffer with Christ may be a source of asceticism. Many pious Christians have desired to suffer grievously as part of their program of becoming as much like Christ as possible. Some men are not content to be the passive recipients of God's favor. They wish to establish contact with God by suffering in behalf of others as Jesus did, and to show their gratitude to Him by participating in His suffering for humanity. Hardman thinks that this is an essential part of the Christian attitude:

> And for St. Paul as for every other understanding Christian, the acceptance of the crucified Christ as Lord meant not simply a self-satisfied assurance of Personal redemption through His sufferings, but an enduring relationship, an ever-deepening gratitude, and an acknowledged necessity for undergoing a process of conformity to His likeness . . . Having become a lover of Christ, he must suffer together with Him, mysteriously realizing through this fellowship

[25] *Cf.* Hardman, *op. cit.*, 136 ff.

of suffering both the redemption and the conformity which are yet of Christ alone.[26]

The great medieval ascetics are represented by Hardman as not suffering for the benefit of their own souls, but vicariously with Christ in behalf of the world and the Church because they believed that they were members of Christ's body, and that Christ's offering would not be complete without the offering of every member, theirs included. Hence their offering was an offering of themselves in union with Christ in behalf of a sinful and sorrow-ridden world.[27]

Desire to suffer with Christ is also motivated at times by a great love of humanity. As Christ loved humanity and was willing to die for it, so devoted followers of Christ have fallen under the spell of the same love of humanity and have sought to pool their suffering in its behalf, as it were, with that of Christ in His effort to secure the salvation of all men. Among the cases Hardman cites in illustration of this motive is one of the prayers of St. Catherine of Siena: "Lord, give me all the pains and all the infirmities that there are in the world, to bear in my body; I am fain to offer Thee my body as a sacrifice, and to bear all for the world's sins, that Thou mayest spare it and change its life to another."[28]

(h) Devotion to an ideal may become a source of asceticism. Instances of this are found in many fields. If a scholar or scientist, through fear that he may be influenced to exercise less rigor in weighing the evidence in support of a theory that awards human nature high standing demands impossibly difficult credentials, he

[26] *Ibid.*, 90.

[27] *Ibid.*, 183, note.

[28] *Ibid.*, 184.

belongs in this group. Devotion to his ideal of truth causes him to risk injustice to his cravings for a view of human nature and of the universe that would confer added significance upon it and the assurance of cosmic support. Likewise the athlete who takes pains to keep his strength unimpaired in order that he may win for his college is practicing restraints ascetic in character for an ideal. The earnest student also, who foregoes many pleasures in order that he may the better carry on his life's work, is something of an ascetic. All men have visions of a better state, but some of them take their visions as fleeting fancies. Others take them seriously and put various curbs on their lower natures, at times driving themselves to do the hard and difficult against their native inclination to follow the line of least resistance. People of this stamp are in a true sense ascetics. Nobody gets them mixed with people who give themselves up to a life made up of whims and fancies. Out of fidelity to certain ideals and ambitions they forego many of the pleasures men ordinarily seek.[29]

Asceticism and Human Nature. The study of asceticism should make certain characteristics of human nature stand out in clear relief. Under the influence of hedonistic and behavioristic psychology we have become too much inclined to think that man always follows the line of least resistance, that his constant aim is pleasure achieved by indulgence of the appetites or the possession of wealth. The study of asceticism shows above all things that man is not motivated wholly by such considerations. It shows us men so repelled by the emptiness of a life made up of one pleasure after another that they voluntarily take the vow of poverty, renounce all the joys

[29] *Cf.* Youtz, *The Supremacy of the Spiritual*, 57; also Hardman, *op. cit.*, 1-2.

of the appetites and senses, and deliberately seek the arduous and painful. On the other hand, it makes plain that the desire for development through self-mastery as a means may become so powerful that it will run out into all kinds of excesses. It proves beyond peradventure that by an act of the will men and women of all sorts and conditions may do violence to their natural likes and dislikes for the sake of an ideal.

These characteristics of human nature need to be stressed; for we are inclined to think the road to virtue can be made like so many others an easy one. Therefore it is popular to stress imagination as the source of personal development. Imagining a life of purity patterned after the ideal, it is said, will put a check upon evil desires and subject us to the jurisdiction of the ideal. No doubt picturing a life of beauty and loyalty and making it the object of desire is a great aid to moral development. But this employment of the power of imagination ought not to close our eyes to the fact that the will after all is the backbone of character and he who fails to keep it strong by much exercise must always be suspected of moral flabbiness. Moreover in many cases a display of will in a positive manner is the most effective method open to men of gaining the victory over some low desire. And the soundness of this principle is not impugned by the fact that many ascetics failed because they attempted tasks beyond successful accomplishment by the will of man. They at times overreached the mark and in so doing invited failure. Nonetheless asceticism demonstrates both that man can assert mastery over himself and that he does not need to creep upon himself in the dark to do so. A sharp, decided assertion of the will frequently wins the day for the desired activity, and in addition a feeling

ensues of mastery and accomplishment of a temper not obtainable otherwise.[30]

Above all, a study of asceticism reveals to us the great influence exerted by ideals, concepts, and beliefs on conduct. Modern psychology rightly emphasizes the dynamic. But it has taken a curiously limited view of what constitute the dynamic factors in human behavior. It tends to erect our innate urges or instincts into the sole sources of motivation for behavior. It is responsible for the impression current that the interests of different individuals will be the same regardless of the conception of life they may entertain.

Asceticism exposes the falsity of this view. Instead of man obeying his native inclinations and following the course of conduct natural to him as an animal, it shows that man frequently goes counter to his animal nature successfully. It demonstrates that his power of projecting ideals provides man with dynamic sources of motivation far different from those that belong to the usual lists of so-called specific instincts. It shows us that one of the greatest driving forces in man is his devotion to ideals. Sometimes these have been false, and then his very devotion has been his undoing. The point is that some men have been loyal to an ideal no matter what it cost them. That loyalty became for them the great dynamic force of their lives. Human nature and behavior cannot be fully understood without duly recognizing the function and value of this devotion and loyalty to a chosen ideal.

Value of Asceticism. In considering the value of asceticism a distinction should be made between normal ascetic practices and pathological ones. The right cri-

[30] *Cf.* Hardman, *op. cit.*, 156-9.

terion to use in the determination of normality or abnormality is success or failure in the attainment of the end or purpose of asceticism. Asceticism is normal when it tends toward the development of personality or stimulates moral and spiritual growth; it turns pathological when devotion to its practices becomes so intense that its true purpose is lost sight of and missed. It is normal when it accomplishes its end, abnormal when it misses the mark. It is, of course, very hard in some instances to draw a sharp distinction between what is normal and abnormal in ascetic practices. Sometimes it is hard to say where the one ends and the other begins. Yet the extreme forms can easily be labeled, and these will serve as types. For instance, no one would hesitate to say that the following is a descriptive of asceticism that has crossed the chalk line of the normal and become pathological:

> On the borders of the Ganges the Yogin strives by every exaggeration of torture to emancipate his soul, and confound it with God; falling into raptures of ecstatic love, his soul addresses the Deity as a wife speaks to her husband. Yogins swarming with vermin, covered with dirt, mixing filth with their food, running skewers through their cheeks, suspending themselves by hooks thrust into their flesh, standing on one foot many years, being for half a life-time upon sharp nails, strive by withdrawing their affections from all things here below, to fix them with greater intensity on the Divinity above.[31]

On the otherhand, a man's refusal to pamper his body with rich food, to impair its efficiency by the use of drugs,

[31] Moses, *op. cit.*, 76, Moses quotes from Baring-Gould, *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, 366.

to let the love of pleasure interfere with full attention to the serious things of life, and the exercise of control over appetite and passion can in no sense be regarded as pathological.[32] An undue emphasis on its pathological forms has tended to withdraw attention from the true ascetic ideal and its virtues.

Asceticism is a perfectly sound principle of moral development. Moral character grows as a result of exercise. We become courageous by acting courageously. We become masters of ourselves by asserting mastery of our desires and appetites. We grow morally by setting up moral restraints upon ourselves and living in accordance with them. A person who seldom or never acts courageously, who habitually acts as the passing impulse dictates, does not develop courage, that is, the willingness and ability to stand up for a worthy purpose in the face of real danger. Likewise a person who puts little or no moral restraint upon himself, who never asserts mastery over appetite, or who never triumphs over pain does not develop a moral personality. Moral character grows by functioning in moral situations. Unless an individual treats his activities as possessing moral significance and governs himself accordingly he turns his back upon his opportunities to become a moral personality.

On the other hand, a person who has practiced self-control and has known what it means to battle and master his lower and disorganized impulses and desires has a sense of the worth and significance of personality impossible to one who has not been through similar experiences. He who regulates his behavior by the behests of his moral will finds within himself a seat of control that seems truly divine. Such experiences lead him to

[32] *Cf.* Hardman, *op. cit.*, 211 ff.

share Kant's high appreciation of the value of personality. He comes to view personality as sacred. So it has always been viewed by the deeply religious. Personality is a fitting abode for God. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" is the conviction of the truly religious.

Asceticism is thus both a means to the development of personality and a source of a deeper understanding and appreciation of it. Moreover, men who act in this god-like manner in regulating their own behavior arrive at a new understanding of God, and through this new understanding of God their eyes are opened to the divine in man. This insight makes the love of humanity enjoined by the religious consciousness easy of attainment by them. Asceticism, therefore, is not merely a sound principle of conduct with its roots deep in human nature, but it opens a way of its own toward God and a greater love of humanity.

Society today needs a greater measure of asceticism for its own good. Never in history, to be sure, has there been the magnitude of desire there is in the world today on the part of society to help its unfortunate members and to lift the whole of the human race to higher levels. Reform measures of all descriptions are advocated and all kinds of social service programs undertaken by society. While this is good and augurs well for better future relations between men, yet it is not sufficient. No matter how well men may be housed, clothed, and fed, unless the work of character development prospers and men sober in their habits and desires learn to look for their well-being within rather than without, no great and lasting good will be accomplished. Universal practice of something of the ascetic ideal is necessary. Historically the great ascetics stand out as examples of lives rich and full that did not

need to cater to externals or the appetites. Today society, riddled as it is by the two great desires—sex and wealth—needs to have the practicability of this other life proclaimed to it. It needs to have the truth impressed upon it that if the ascetic is giving up some things nonetheless he feels more than repaid.

> "Men suppose that we are in torture and in penance great," says Richard Rolle of Hampole, "but we have more joy and more very delight in a day than they have in the world all their life. They see our body; but they do not see our heart where our solace is. If they saw that, many of them would forsake all that they have, for to follow us." A great Love has awakened an echo in the human heart, and as the Christian advances towards his goal he rejoices with a joy which no man can take away . . . His education goes on until he has been brought to his perfection, always with his own wholehearted co-operation and sustained effort; but at whatever stage of the process death may come, salvation is assured, and the process will be carried to its issue beyond the grave.[33]

The part played by asceticism in religion and in society has been stated admirably by Durkheim:

[33] *Ibid.*, 160-161. Perhaps it should be noted here that not *all* ascetics find such joy. Many for long periods are tormented with doubts. Some resolve to give up all for God or for their ideal, and then begin to question if after all the self has been subdued. Moreover, many experience great suffering in attempting to conquer their appetites. Indeed, the lives of many ascetics are intensely pathetic. Having voluntarily deprived themselves of the commonly accepted goods of life, they suffer torments from temptations as well as from doubts of their own sincerity and humility.

> Society itself is possible only at this price. Though exalting the strength of man, it is frequently rude to individuals; it necessarily demands perpetual sacrifices from them; it is constantly doing violence to our natural appetites, just because it raises us above ourselves. If we are going to fulfill our duties towards it, then we must be prepared to do violence to our instincts sometimes and to ascend the decline of nature when it is necessary. So there is an asceticism which, being inherent in all social life, is destined to survive all mythologies and all dogmas; it is an integral part of all human culture. At bottom, this is the asceticism which is the reason for the existence of and the justification of that which has been taught by the religions of all times.[34]

And speaking of asceticism as found in all religions, though with especial reference to Christianity and the religion of the primitive Australian, he says:

> But in both cases the principle is the same. In both it is admitted that suffering creates exceptional strength. And this belief is not without foundation. In fact, it is by the way in which he braves suffering that the greatness of a man is best manifested. He never rises above himself with more brilliancy than when he subdues his own nature to the point of making it follow a way contrary to the one it would spontaneously take. By this he distinguishes himself from all other creatures who follow blindly wherever pleasure calls them; by this he makes a place apart for himself in the world. Suffering is the sign that certain of the bonds attaching him to

[34] *Op. cit.*, 316-317.

> his profane environment are broken; so it testifies that he is partially freed from his environment, and, consequently, it is justly considered the instrument of deliverance. So he who is thus delivered is not the victim of a pure illusion when he believes himself invested with a sort of mastery over things: he really has raised himself above them, by the very act of renouncing them; he is stronger than nature because he makes it subside.[35]

SUMMARY. After a definition and description of asceticism an account of its various sources was given. Asceticism has its roots deep in human nature. Indeed it is frequently an expression of the noblest side of man and does much to reveal the heights of moral grandeur men can attain. In drawing men out it exposes the divine in them and adds to our appreciation of human personality. In these ways it stimulates religious development of the highest type.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING:

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[35] *Ibid.*, 315.

Chapter XII

PRAYER

The key to the understanding of prayer lies in the imagination just as the key to the understanding of asceticism lies in the will. Both are gateways to the divine; asceticism through the exercise of the moral will, and prayer by rendering articulate our higher aspirations and cultivating the sense of the presence of God. Prayer differs from asceticism in that its importance is generally recognized. It is highly esteemed as a means of keeping God vital in the lives of believers and as a path to personal and spiritual development. It also supplies a means of transcending the purely human point of view in the consideration of moral problems by inviting their consideration in the light of the moral principle declared to be inherent in nature or from the point of view of a great moral personality.

Definition and Classification. Prayer may be defined either functionally, that is, in terms of the mental operations involved, or it may be defined in terms of its aim or purpose. Prayer from the functional point of view is a process of communication between the narrow egoistic self and the socialized self through which an ever completer and more adequate self emerges.[1] A word of explanation may help to clear up this definition. Every personality acts as caretaker to a great variety of interests. Sometimes one interest comes to the fore in consciousness

[1] For statement of this conception of prayer see Strong, *The Psychology of Prayer*, 24-25.

and gets its way, sometimes another. The selves differ according to which interest dominates. Thus the "me" on the golf links is different from the "me" of the same individual encountered in his office. The patriot "me" anxious to serve his country is different from the "me" of the same individual who stands behind a counter. Some of these selves move on a higher plane than others. It frequently happens that two selves spring to the fore of consciousness simultaneously and then a conflict ensues. Prayer can remove the quarrel to a plane higher than either of the opposing selves. It enables the individual to bring his opposing interests into contact and square them either with his highest ethical conceptions or his God idea; in this way the opposing interests are resolved in a new and higher self. Prayer so viewed is one mode of sublimation.

The design of prayer in terms of aim or purpose is to obtain blessings through persuasion or entreaty by establishing closer contact with spiritual agencies or with ideals; or to enjoy the presence of, and to worship the object to which the prayer is directed. This is obviously the conception of prayer that the religious adopt when praying, and it is the conception that will be employed in the discussion that follows.

While the foregoing definition of prayer is purposely inclusive so as to cover a great variety of prayers, yet it rejects much that is frequently regarded as prayer. It eliminates, for instance, the incantations of primitive peoples. Since their aim is to compel rather than persuade, they should be classified as rites of magic. It would also exclude many prayers on the ground that they are uttered mechanically and it is right to declare that they too have degenerated into magic.

Praying that has sunk to the level of vain repetitions is

to be found in all the great religions. Perhaps the most extreme case is that of the Buddhists of Tibet where machines called prayer wheels on which prayers are inscribed are rotated. The rotation is purely mechanical, yet those who turn the wheel believe that in so doing they are storing up merit for themselves. Among Christians, it is to be feared, praying frequently goes on that is only a little less mechanical. The same is true of the Jews. "The Orthodox Jews repeat on the Day of Atonement and New Year the following phrase, with slight additions and variations, one hundred and sixty-eight times: 'For the sin we have committed in thy presence,' etc. And on the week days they repeat the following forty-four times and twenty-six times respectively: 'Our Father, Our King,' etc. 'For His mercy endureth forever,' etc."[2]

Prayers may be classified in terms of their aim or purpose, or in respect to the object invoked. From the standpoint of purpose prayers divide into two groups, namely, petitional and aesthetic prayers. Each of these may be again subdivided into two other groups. Petitional prayers may sue for a gift or for personal growth. God may be asked either to give the individual or group something desirable outright or to coöperate with the individual in obtaining it. In the one case something is sought to be gained at no expense; in the other help and courage are sought to make the effort expended successful. Aesthetic prayers may be forms of worship and of giving thanks, or they may usher in the conscious feeling and enjoyment of the presence of God.

Prayers may also be classified in terms of the object to which prayer is directed or the image held before the praying mind. The orthodox theist prays God for

[2] Moses, *Pathological Aspects of Religions*, 136 f.

strength. So does he pray for strength who seeks to tap unused sources of strength within himself, or to draw upon the Absolute, or upon the Cosmic Control empirically shown to be purposive, energetic, and on the side of the good life. Yet the prayers are decidedly different. In one case courage is sought to be gained by an individual through the intervention of a personal superior being; in the other through closer contact with uplifting, though impersonal, forces either within or without his person. Both seek strength; both feel the need of drawing on spiritual forces resident in the universe. One seeks to obtain these from a person; the other seeks them by acquiescence in the terms on which the Cosmic Control will grant them.

Asthetic prayers too must be classified in terms of the image held before the praying mind. The Christian who in the midst of an act of devotion senses the presence of God has been engaged in aesthetic prayer. So has the Neo-Platonist who in the midst of holding the Absolute, before himself for contemplation finally feels himself lost in the totality of being. Yet these prayers are different. We therefore feel the necessity of classifying prayer in terms of the object to which the prayer is made.

The statement that prayers may be directed toward impersonal substitutes for a personal God may be challenged. Therefore a word in its defense may be advisable. Much of the difficulty of understanding how prayer to an a-personal God is possible is due to past inheritance and training. Naturally those who have been taught to believe in a personal God, and that all those who pray do likewise, feel that intellectual honesty forbids the attempt on their part to pray to an a-personal being. Moreover their understanding of what constitute answers to prayer is frequently such as to outlaw answers

to prayer offered to an a-personal being. The author believes that a more thorough analysis of the nature of prayer would enable the individual who no longer believes in a personal God to pray successfully.

That the practice of aesthetic prayer to an a-personal being presents no great difficulty becomes apparent upon reflection. Indeed the aesthetic prayers of theists and pantheists are often closely akin enough to belong to the same species. Personality as far as both God and the suppliant are concerned is lost in the perfect blend, the absolute oneness of all existence. The great Christian mystics traveled far in this direction. An excellent example of successful prayer to an a-personal being is to be found in Plotinus. It enabled him to reach the goal of all the great mystics, namely, the feeling that his personal isolation had disappeared, absorbed into the totality of being.

The difficulty of understanding how petitional prayers can be offered to an a-personal being is greater. Yet it is by no means insurmountable. Grant, for instance, that the universe is purposive. Believe now that these purposes are on the side of the things we look upon as best or of greatest worth, and reverence would be a natural reaction. The Cosmic Control looked upon in this way becomes a source of courage and peace. The habit of so looking upon the universe may build up a strong conviction that those characteristics which enable him to draw upon that Cosmic Control for strength are divine. In a sense he is their offspring and he thus becomes filled with filial love and piety. This attitude is in sharp contrast to that of the magician, who seeks to compel nature to perform an act of welfare for him and who considers the character of the means employed of no consequence. The lover of nature does not attempt to wrest gifts from

her in a bullying fashion. He knows that they cannot be obtained in that way. He seeks to put himself in an attitude which will enable him to receive the power he needs. Whether it wells up from within or rolls in from without is of no essential consequence to him. An attitude which thus seeks closer contact with the forces in cosmic control in order to gain strength may well be regarded as an equivalent of petitional prayer.[3]

Moreover it is easy to lay too much stress and spend too much time on arriving at exactly correct metaphysical conceptions of God and the divine. Speculative conceptions of God are one thing; practical dealings with the divine are another. Illuminating illustrations of this difference can be found in the religions of India,[4] but the example of Stoicism is among the more familiar instances. Although the Stoics accepted a materialistic pantheism they did not hesitate to address the order of the universe as a person when the need of expressing their sense of accord and union and companionship with it arose. The hymn of Cleanthes is a beautiful illustration:

> Thee is it lawful for all mortals to address. For we are Thy offspring, and alone of living creatures possess a voice which is the image of reason . . . O Zeus . . . deliver men from their foolishness. Scatter it from their souls, and grant them to obtain wisdom, for by Thy wisdom Thou doest rightly govern all things; that being honoured we may repay Thee

[3] "I desire, and look up, and put myself in the attitude of reception. I am a pensioner, not the source of this ethereal water; from some higher energy these visions come." . . . "The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God" (Emerson's *Essays*, quoted from Moses, *op. cit.*, 123).

[4] See Hopkins, *The Origin and Evolution of Religion*, chapters on the Hindu and Buddhist Trinities.

> with honour, singing Thy works without ceasing, as it is right for us to do. For there is no greater thing than this, either for mortal men or for the gods, to sing rightly the universal law.

Surely it is possible to offer such a prayer in a way that would elevate and stimulate the suppliant to strive harder to live a life of reason. Note how Cleanthes pays the same homage to nature conceived as a domain of universal law for creating man and bestowing reason upon him that the theist pays his personal God for the same blessings.[5] Both these prayers which make greater devotion to the life of reason the object of petition may be granted. The relative merits of prayer to a personal God and to an a-personal being have already been discussed in the chapter entitled "Belief in God." It is also taken up again in the section below on the determinants of the efficacy of prayer. The point made here is that prayer directed toward an a-personal being may succeed in its mission.

Prompting to Prayer. The conditions that prompt men to pray do not concern the historical origin of prayer, which may have been in the tendency of the solitary to hold an oral conversation with himself; or in the spontaneous impulse to give strong emotion voice; perhaps in the longing of communities in emergencies for the masterly guidance of heroes dead and gone; perhaps in magic; perhaps in all of these combined. Moreover it is a perfectly obvious inference that men who have come to believe that spirits can affect them for good or ill will

[5] It should be freely admitted that though prayer to an a-personal being is possible, yet the history of religions shows a strong tendency to personalize the objects of devotion. Philosophically a religious body may accept an a-personal substitute for a personal God; in practice it will personify that substitute in the interest of greater companionableness.

seek to persuade these spirits to be kind; and that after they have come to love their deities they will seek communion with them. By various roads men arrive at a conception of an ideal world; naturally they seek to communicate with it. Hence the question of the origin of prayer is an offshot of a prior question as to the origin of the idea of gods and the conception of an ideal world.

But men who believe in gods do not always pray. What are the conditions, it may be asked, which prompt men to pray? First to be considered will be the situations which lead to petitional prayer then those that lead to aesthetic prayer.

The situations or conditions which lead to petitional prayer are simple to understand. Just as a child in times of trouble runs to its parents, so the religious man under similar conditions turns to prayer. Hence danger of any kind such as war, pestilence, and famine evokes prayer for succor. The same refuge is sought in reverses of all sorts such as shattered ambitions, the loss of property, friends, or reputation. Likewise situations with which the individual feels helpless to cope unaided lead to prayer. Uncertainty regarding the outcome of an issue beyond the power of the one affected to control almost compels him to resort to prayer. Finally the assumption of new responsibilities and obligations provides the man who takes his task seriously an occasion for prayer.

The conditions that prompt men to engage in aesthetic prayer are on the whole of a higher order and indicative of a more highly developed personality than those that lead them to the use of petitional prayer. They are the great sources of mysticism and will be discussed in the following chapter, and so we shall merely name them now. A great love for God and of moral perfection may develop an urge which drives the individual to seek closer

bonds of accord between himself and God. Just as the child on occasion throws its arms about its mother's neck without anything in mind to seek, so the religious at times express in prayer their love of God and their consuming desire to live in the divine presence. The other great prompting source of aesthetic prayer is yearning for cosmic support. Highly developed and reflective personalities have frequent spells of loneliness. This may be due to the instability attaching to an overplus, of self-consciousness; or to the accent it puts on the sense of separation from the totality of being; perhaps it is the inarticulate yearning of the part and contingent for the whole and absolute; perhaps it is the price that must be paid for growth of personality. At any rate men seek refuge from these hours of cosmic loneliness in closer contact with an higher order of being. The great mystics have been eminently successful in this quest.

Growth of Discrimination regarding the Objects of Prayer. It is to be expected that the adult will exercise greater discrimination in selecting the ends to be aimed at in prayer than the child. This growing discrimination is a by-product of growth in ethical insight and in knowledge regarding the efficacy of prayer.

A child does not hesitate to ask God for toys and similar things that seem trivial to the adult. Even fairly grown boys and girls see no impropriety in asking God to give them the victory in their games. And many adults, it must be admitted, pray for possessions unabashed. But as religious understanding deepens prayer becomes too sacred to be used for anything less than spiritual blessings. Thus while college girls acknowledge that they do pray for success in examinations and in their games, they also confess that they feel secretly ashamed

at bothering God with such petty concerns.[6] Discrimination like this is a sign of growing ethical insight.

Polytheistic religions made it entirely appropriate to pray for trivial things. The sway of their lesser deities was confined to such matters. In Catholic countries the saints serve somewhat this same purpose today. "Goodness sake," "The Fates," and "The god of chance," are relics of the same attitude that crop out in our own culture. Slowly among every people the conviction develops that its deepest religious life, centered about its great gods or God, must not dishonor itself by coveting anything less than spiritual blessings. The relation between the devotee and his God becomes too sacred for commonplace, trivial matters to receive an audience.

Discrimination in selecting the ends to be aimed at in prayer may also proceed from a truer understanding of the nature and limitations of prayer. He who continually prays for material goods, it is to be expected, will finally become convinced by repeated failures that prayer is not the way to obtain them. This realization, it must be admitted, is slow in coming, and to some it never comes. No matter what happens they cling to their mistaken faith and explain their failures by saying that their faith was too weak, or that God withholds the desired blessings because of their sin, or that God knows what is best for them. But continued failure in other cases does lead to the recognition that the efficacy of prayer does not extend to the procuring of physical goods. Discrimination and insight obtained in this way may be thought of as scientific in its nature. Increase of understanding of the psychological processes involved in prayer and of the ways prayer may be efficacious should be a source of

[6] Strong, *op. cit.*

greater discrimination in selecting the ends at which to aim.

Answers to Prayers. It is natural that man on sending messages to his gods should seek to get replies from them. His choice of receiving instruments makes an interesting and instructive study.

(1) One of his earliest ways of receiving a communication from the gods was the casting of lots. It was thought that chance by ruling out human interference afforded the gods an opportunity to declare their will. Hence, following a sacrifice or prayer lots were cast to allow the gods to speak. An echo of this practice occurs when a pious Christian who desires to know God's will prays God for guidance and, on the completion of the prayer, opens the Bible and takes whatever passage he puts his finger on as God's message in answer to the problem put to Him in his prayer.

(2) Another method of getting an answer was the practice of finding messages from the gods in the entrails of fowls or through other omens. This was in general use in the ancient world. Rome, for instance, before declaring war had first to discover the will of the gods, for or against. That question was put to the gods and then the answer deciphered from the condition of the entrails of a fowl that had been killed for the purpose.

(3) A third method of obtaining answers from the gods was to give up as completely as possible all control over one's faculties, thus leaving the way open for some spirit to take charge and use them to express its will. Shamans and priests in primitive societies were supposed to be especially gifted in this respect. It is the old idea that movements and utterances no longer under conscious human control are the deliverances of the gods. Among

Quakers we find the same practice carried to a very high form of sublimation in speaking when the spirit moves them. A degenerate survival is to be found in the apologetic respect shown by many for the ouija board and automatic writing.

(4) Astrology has been widely used as a method of obtaining answers from the gods. Since the movements of the stars are beyond human control it has been thought that a code could be discovered by which some knowledge of the will of the gods could be obtained from them. Even today some of those who claim to be able to foretell the future use a code to read that future in the stars.

(5) Success interpreted as a sign of approval by the gods is another method by which answers are obtainable from them. For instance, one may be in doubt as to the morality of a given enterprise and may pray over it before undertaking it. If it turns out successful, he may become convinced that means the approval of the god addressed. Success generally may be regarded as an indication of God's favor. Thus among the Puritans it was felt that long years of success in business was a clear sign of God's favor. Indeed, that criterion was responsible in no small degree for their strenuous efforts to succeed.[7]

(6) Another way used to obtain communications from God is for the group to dedicate an exceptionally spiritual-minded member to that office for life. Making it his sole preoccupation is supposed to increase his sensitiveness to the spiritual world, and it is his duty to declare whatever he learns of the will of that world to the rest of the group. Among primitive people the shaman or medicine man performed this function in one way, and among the ancient Jews the prophets performed it on a

[7] Mecklin, *Introduction to Social Ethics*, 32 ff.

higher plane. Among the Greeks the Delphic Oracle served this purpose. The Catholic Church claims to be the medium of direct communication between God and men and the ministry in Protestant churches are expected to qualify for this office.

(7) Finally the new insight, peace, appreciation, and understanding that come from prayer are identified as God's replies by those who seek Him directly. Prayer is the man's petition and the illumination and poise are God's answers. When one prays over his problems and then obscurities clear and his duty becomes plain, he knows that God has spoken to him. Likewise when the panic-stricken pray for courage to bear some great affliction and arise from their knees with a great feeling of peace, they know that God has directly answered their prayer. They feel the need of no other means of getting messages from God.

The Efficacy of Prayer. Excessive claims have been made for the power of prayer. Many of these upon examination have to be dismissed as unreasonable. The claim, for instance, to the power to produce rain by prayer appears unwarranted. It puts too much strain on all that we know of the factors concerned in weather conditions, the nature of prayer, and our general conception of God. Equally vulnerable appear the claims that gifts are to be had merely by praying for them. For example, take the clergyman who prayed God for a new suit. On going downtown one of his church members gave him one and he took that gift to be a direct answer of God to his prayer. George Muller interpreted his success in conducting an orphan asylum with gifts that came as they were needed often just in the nick of time as evidence that prayer is a means of securing gifts from God.

These claims are convicted of unreasonableness not only by what we know of prayer but by our conceptions of the justice of God. Why should God play favorites and single out George Muller to receive special care and leave countless numbers of His other devotees to suffer from cold and hunger? The efficacy of prayer lies not in possessions obtained or physical conditions ameliorated but in new stores of courage and energy, kindliness, and moral insight. These of course, may lead to resolutions that will stick to bring about physical changes of all sorts. In brief, the efficacy of prayer consists in character shaping rather than in material gifts. This in the opinion of the highly developed and reflection religious consciousness is as it should be. As Wright says, "From a moral standpoint we really could not desire that prayer were efficacious in any respect in which it is not efficacious."[8]

Let us consider briefly some specific ways in which prayer may be efficacious: (1) Prayer may be of yeoman service as a means of converting a merely intellectual belief in the existence of God into a vital realization that the door of access to God's presence is open. In this way prayer effectively contributes in developing courage and poise and in extracting all the other values that inhere in a vital rather than a theoretical belief in God.

(2) Prayer may be helpful in sickness. The patient who prays for his own recovery and gains in confidence and courage thereby helps along his recovery. Or a patient who is convinced that recovery is impossible may gain through prayer the poise and courage required to

[8] *A Student's Philosophy of Religion,* 269. The author wishes to acknowledge his general indebtedness to Wright for his treatment of prayer.

face the inevitable. Even the knowledge that he is being prayed for may do him good.[9]

(3) Prayer may also prove itself to be an efficient means of moral and spiritual growth. Holding before himself the ideals which excite his loyalty during an hour of meditation and contemplating, is an undoubtedly profitable exercise for anyone. For the Christian it means holding before himself in contemplation Christ and the ideals Christ stood for and through this communing with Christ he becomes more Christlike.

(4) Prayer may also prove of value by becoming a source of illumination. Seasons of prayer over personal moral problems in an effort to secure divine guidance mean psychologically viewed guidance from the person's highest and most ideal self. Under that searchlight desires change places and many that had formerly seemed important sink to a plane of relative insignficance. They are seen as it is imagined God sees them. This changed point of view carries in its train a flood of illumination. Prayer in this way not only makes for the emancipation involved in an objective attitude but may enable the devotee to adopt the solution of his problems contained in the light of his highest ideals.

Prayer in making for illumination in the above way makes for poise. Left to ourselves all things that affect the ego are viewed as important, which shuts us off from the poise obtainable by taking a broader and more objective view. Prayer may become a means of transcending not only the egoistic point of view but the human point of view altogether; it may reach a level from which problems formerly viewed as purely personal are transformed in the light of the Absolute or the Cosmic Con-

[9] This is also true of prayers of intercession for those engaged in a moral struggle.

trol. How great a peace and poise may be the outcome the history of the Stoics and of Oriental religions today demonstrate.

The foregoing discussion has proceeded on the assumption that the higher self of the individual assumes control in prayer. Yet this is not always the case. In prayer we allow, as it were, our conscience to speak. But conscience, particularly on its religious side, is largely a product of social suggestion received in childhood and youth. Hence it is possible that prayer may enthrone immature moral prepossessions and thus prevent us from acting in the light of our best but more recently acquired knowledge. Prayer in this respect partakes of a danger inherent in all forms of moral intuitionalism—it may base its findings on the ideals accepted unreflectively rather than on an intelligent examination of the facts. Hence precautions must be taken against letting prayer lead us into the pitfall of substituting sentiment and moral prepossessions for a careful investigation and study of the problem under consideration. In the exercise of intelligence lies the hope of the moral and spiritual, as well as the scientific, progress of man.

(5) Prayer is a powerful socializing agency of high value. It is not hard to see why this should be so; a socialized person is one who stands ready to put group or social above personal wants and needs, and this is just the attitude prayer tends to reënforce. This capacity of prayer makes it of great value in bringing diverse interests together and forming them into a group. Nowhere perhaps can a better illustration be found than the history of the Constitutional Convention.[10] If men can be

[10] When it looked as if the Convention would adjourn without accomplishing its purpose, Franklin asked for prayer. Following this prayer, which was the first one in the Convention, a spirit of greater toleration pervaded the assembly (Atwood, in a speech before University of South Dakota).

brought to pray over their differences they tend to be carried out of themselves to a new meeting place on the level of their common interests; in other words to socialize themselves in the process.

(6) Prayer may also be effective when used as a means of bringing peace to an individual oppressed with the weight of his sin. Whoever knows that he has been false to his God or that he has offended Him otherwise feels the need of making a confession. In this respect relations between him and his God are not different from those between two individuals where the one who has injured or deceived the other cannot expect the old relations to be resumed until he has confessed or atoned for his wrongdoing. Prayer is the means used by the sinner to confess his sins and beg the forgiveness of God.

(7) Prayer is an effective group means of focusing its attention upon its own defects and arousing it to greater effort to correct them. Taking a good look at ourselves in the light of what we know we should be is always salutary discipline if it leads to a resolution that sticks to strive harder for the ideal. Nothing seems better suited to this purpose than prayer.

> Suppose that in all the churches and synagogues of a city or of a nation one day every week the communicants were to come together and pray after this manner: "O God, we confess to Thee our remorse and shame at the sins of society for which we as citizens are in large measure to blame. We have permitted little children in this city (or nation) to be deprived of schooling and put to long hours of excessive labor that we might buy cheaper clothing. We have permitted young girls to be led into the horrors of white slavery partly because we were too

indifferent to provide decent places of amusement so that their only chance of recreation was in questionable surroundings; partly because we were too greedy to obtain profits from business, or to buy cheap merchandise, to insist that working girls be paid living wages, and partly because we were too indifferent to provide places in our homes where our domestic servants could suitably entertain their friends. We have been bigoted in our hostility to every attempt of workingmen to better their conditions and have uncharitably criticized the mistakes of their unions instead of trying to sympathize with them and to help them. We have been fanatical in our hatred of successful business men and heads of corporations and have failed to appreciate their services to society, or to understand the difficulties under which they work. We have each of us been concerned with his own personal and family interests and refused to take an interest in elections, or to be candidates for office ourselves, and we have unthinkingly and cruelly abused those who were willing to do so. Lord, we have all erred and strayed from Thy ways in neglect of our obligations to this city (or nation)—have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!" If we could imagine such a confession as this being honestly repeated weekly in every place of worship in any city or in the land as a whole, can we imagine that it would be long before the reserve energies of the city or nation would be brought into action, and that these shameful iniquities would be removed from us! In like manner, if in all the places of worship in the countries involved in the late war, Christian, Jewish and Moslem alike, the worshippers were to pray sincerely in confession of

their own shortcomings and in desire to understand the point of view of their enemies, would it be long before international justice and the civic and political rights of all individuals of every race and nation could in some way be assured by universal agreement, and future wars be rendered impossible?[11]

On What Does the Efficacy of Prayer Depend? Before taking up the factors that determine the efficacy of prayer it will be advisable to clear away some possible misconceptions. Prayer does not depend for its success in practice on any particular conception of the being or object to which the prayer is addressed. The evidence is conclusive that prayer may succeed in its aim when offered to a block of wood regarded solely as a means of fixing attention, to an idol, to God thought of as personal or as an a-personal being or object. This does not mean that prayer is equally easy or effective no matter what the conception of the being or object to which the prayer is addressed. It is highly important, for instance, if ethical guidance is to be obtained from prayer, that the being or object prayed to should be endowed with the highest ethical qualities that the devotee is capable of appreciating.

It is also important that prayer should be made to the God of the group to which the suppliant belongs, rather than to one of his own contriving. This is true for several reasons. For one thing, it is easier. No one can go counter to the habits and beliefs impressed upon him since childhood without something of a strained condition or divided self as the outcome. In the second place, those religious symbols and conceptions that are group products seem to appropriate and retain something of the

[11] Wright, *op. cit.*, 273-4.

collective might of the group. They seem to possess a higher degree of reality than any conception an ordinary individual can hope to formulate for himself. Finally, acceptance of group symbols and conceptions amounts to an avowal of solidarity with the group. In that act one of the ends of prayer is partially accomplished, namely, the socialization of the individual. On the other hand, rejection of group symbols or conceptions is an act that separates an individual somewhat from the group, and so destroys to a degree his feeling of solidarity with the group and deprives him of the inspiration that belongs to all emotionally charged group products. Moreover, he runs the risk of attaching himself to conceptions below the moral and spiritual level of those to which his group pays homage.

The possibility should be freely acknowledged of a gifted individual advancing beyond the views of his age. But in general the history of religion drives home the lesson that development comes not by sharp breaks with the old and established but rather by fresh sifting of and adding to the old. Naturally this is the case, for religion, to repeat, is a social product, and the comparatively few individuals who make new contributions must first qualify by accepting this principle at its full force. They may then set about making contribution by the skill they show in reinterpreting and reevaluating it. The way of progress does not lie in every man making a new start for himself. Progress lies in conserving as well as in adding to what our predecessors have done.

A reminder should hardly be necessary that the efficacy of prayer does not depend on the use of set phrases either at its beginning or close. Not that these are without their value. Subject to the proviso that they are not uttered mechanically the set phrases at the beginning of the

Christian's prayer on account of their appropriateness serve through suggestion to induce the proper attitude for prayer. Those at the end serve to acknowledge allegiance and love for Christ. A person in the habit of using these expressions undoubtedly finds them helpful. Any attempt to discard them would be a source of distraction and produce a feeling of disloyalty. It is a mistake to think that the rank and file of Christians use these as magic formulas, though the use of them may sink as low as that on occasion. The attitude of the average Christian toward them is very similar to that of the average patriot toward the flag of his country. In saluting the flag the patriot does not feel that the salute possesses some magic power. He does it because he has been taught to do so. Failure to do so would make him feel disloyal and uncomfortable. He prefers instead to show his loyalty and love for country by the use of the conventional sign. So with the Christian. If he were to omit the beginning or ending usual to his prayer he would feel that he had not shown the proper love, respect, and loyalty to Jesus.

Contrary to popular opinion faith in the sense of assurance or certainty of receiving can hardly be regarded as an absolutely necessary pre-condition for the success of prayer. When present it is a very important factor, however. The prayer of an individual for health or courage who expects his prayer to be granted stands a much greater chance of obtaining health and courage than the prayer of one who prays without expecting to obtain that which he seeks. The value of expectancy or faith has been constantly pointed out in previous chapters. Yet it would be a mistake to hold that prayers cannot be successful without this sense of assurance or certainty of receiving. It is with prayer as with conversion and mental

healing. While the person who expects to be stands a greater chance of being converted than one who does not expect to be, yet there are many cases on record of people going to a revival meeting to scoff who have been so affected by it that they experienced a conversion during their stay.[12] Other cases of conversion have occurred suddenly even though the individual converted had given the matter no recent thought.[13] In all these cases it seems clear that faith in the sense of expectation or assurance of receiving, was not a factor. So it is with mental healing. Patients who in spite of their lack of faith have nevertheless been persuaded to follow the directions of the healer have been helped. Faith in the sense of assurance of receiving is of tremendous importance, but it is not indispensable.[14]

The conditions indispensable to efficacy in prayer are (a) more or less intense desire for that for which one prays, (b) proper fixation of the imagination or attention on this boon, and possibly (c) continuation of the exercise for a reasonable length of time.

How important of sincerity of desire is in prayer is not generally perceived, perhaps because it is usually assumed that the person desires that for which he prays. Yet, this assumption is not always true. The neurotic may pray for health without desiring it with the temper of desire that counts. If he became healthy his whole life would have to be reorganized in ways that would compel him to face many unpleasant situations that he is not prepared to face. Likewise a person may pray for purity and

[12] See Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals,* especially Chapter VI.

[13] See James, *Varieties of Religious Experience,* Chapter X.

[14] For an analysis of the necessary conditions of mental healing see Baudouin, *Suggestion and Auto-suggestion.*

righteousness without really desiring to live a pure life or to act justly. Many prayers are hypocritical. That kind need not be expected to be successful. If the exercise of prayer is to make for moral and spiritual growth, the person who prays must desire what he prays for.

It may be objected that the same facts used to show that faith in the sense of assurance or certainty of receiving is not essential may be used to show that desire is not indispensable to efficacy in prayer. If a person can be converted without faith that he is going to be, the claim may be made that it is equally possible for him to be converted without desiring it. The scoffers who gets converted, it will be said, neither expected nor desired such an experience. Also, while it is true that a patient without faith can be cured by the mental healer, it is equally true that an undesired illness can be produced by suggestion. Suggestion indeed seems as potent to produce illnesses as cures.

Nevertheless we stand by the analysis of prayer given above, which shows that desire is, and that faith is not, indispensable to its efficacy. Desire belongs to the very essence of the prayer process, but one may pray without faith that the thing asked for will be granted. The authority of the church, or social pressure, or a great need may cause one to pray. A human being may feel so hard pressed that he tries prayer like everything else suggested. His prayers are genuine though he lacks faith. Not so, however, is it with desire; genuine prayer is impossible without it. Prayer is a form of seeking; in it deeply felt desires are in quest of satisfaction. Otherwise prayer becomes a mockery. Discussion of the second indispensable condition of successful prayer, namely, the proper focusing of the imagination or attention on the boon sought, will serve to bring this point out still more clearly.

For prayer to be successful it is essential that he who prays must hold up before his mind the object of desire. If he prays for health, he must imagine himself healthy.[15] Whether his prayer be for courage, purity, loyalty, or one of the other virtues, that quality and the things which pertain to it must be held repeatedly before the mind. The same is true of aesthetic forms of prayer. Whoever is in quest of God's presence must let his imagination dwell upon that presence. The supreme importance of this principle that the attention shall be transfixed by the boon desired, is illustrated in the case of scoffers who get converted, of patients who get cured by mental healing, and of sickness produced by suggestion. Unless the attention is caught and held it seems clear that the quest of the desire does not reach its journey's end. Moreover, icily intellectual fixation of attention will not be effective until mixed either with desire or fear. Imagery can have little influence over us that does not arouse some emotional attitude. Since prayer is a voluntary act of seeking, imagery and attention must obviously depend on depth of desire. Thus desire proves itself to be an essential condition for success in prayer as well as an indispensable element.

Another factor that in many cases seems essential to efficacy in prayer is the time element. It is idle to expect that an isolated passing moment spent in contemplating God's perfection, or in trying to gain moral insight or courage to face a difficult task, will prove of any great value. Those who count the length of time spent in prayer a matter of no importance credit, it is to be feared, prayer with the possession of magical efficacy. It can all be said in a sentence and that is enough. But prayer is a

[15] This is easy for those possessed by the faith that God will make one healthy.

serious spiritual exercise, which requires time and effort if conducted properly. Sentence prayers for strength in times of emergency are valuable as supplements. But it does not follow that the hour of meditation can be neglected and prayer remain a means of spiritual growth.

The great religions of the world have recognized the importance of these three indispensables to efficacy in prayer. All of them seek to stimulate a greater intensity of desire and aspiration. Christianity seeks to do this largely by associating them with the thought that Christ deserves our love and love for Christ can best be shown by greater devotion to the things Christ stood for. The various religions also aid the seeker in prayer in fixing his attention and imagination on the boon desired by providing religious symbols around which exalted associations have been trained to cluster. Finally, all the great religions have emphasized the benefits to be derived from regular periods of prayer and meditation.

An Interpretation of Prayer. How must the nature of reality be conceived in order that the efficacy of prayer shall fit into the picture? Or what light *per contra* does the efficacy of prayer throw on the nature of reality? After studying the mechanism of prayer and the effects of prayer the next inquiry is why this mechanism works. Three possible explanations will be offered.

The explanation offered by the orthodox Christian is his conviction that a personal God answers the prayers of the faithful just as a father might answer the petitions of his children. A bridge connecting this explanation and the psychological description of prayer is supplied by the theory of James and Cutten that God operates through the unconscious to produce the effects noted in prayer.[16]

[16] James, *op. cit.*, 466, 477, 485, 523; Cutten, *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, 416-17.

Another explanation of the efficacy of prayer is the theory that prayer opens channels which permit the divine within us to have freer flow and to become more effective. It releases otherwise unused powers within us, making for moral and spiritual growth. This explanation has been advanced by Brooks and Charles:

> As Dr. J. A. Hadfield points out, the great psychologists "have tended more and more to the view that the source of power is to be regarded as some impulse that works through us and is not of our making" . . . Life and power is not so much contained in us, it courses through us." We find that Janet speaks of "mental energy," Jung of the "libido" or "urge," Bergson of the "élan vital." No Christian can contemplate this universal power without relating it to God, without seeing in it one of the manifestations of God.
>
> And so it is with the "power within" of which M. Coué constantly speaks. It is not part of our conscious selves; it is not bounded by the limits of our own personality, it is "a force of incalculable power which resides in each one of us." Inevitably one identifies this "force of incalculable power" with the "élan vital," the "urge," the "life-force," and through these with the transcendent power which is the gift of the Immanent God.[17]

The same view is taken by the great German mystic Meister Eckhart: "Folks say to me often—'Pray God for me.' Then I think with myself, 'Why go ye out? Why abide ye not in your own selves, and take hold of your

[17] Brooks and Charles, *Christianity and Autosuggestion*, 68-69.

own possession? Ye have all truth essentially within you.' "[18]

According to this theory prayer is effective because it puts us in an attitude of increased sensitivity to the God within us. Prayer establishes contact between the ordinary self and this reserve supply of spiritual energy in such a way that it becomes effective for use in everyday life. Thus interpreted prayer is a great releasing device. This is a view of prayer which has much in common with the teachings of great religious leaders, for with one voice they have insisted that inward conditions must be made right or no reception of divine influence will ever take place.

The third interpretation of the power of prayer is based on a monistic view of reality. No individual has more than a relative degree of independence. Essentially all that is, is bound together in one immense organic whole. Living bodies and organisms owe their nature and properties in great measure to the system in which they exist. Any given individual is what he is because the cultural and racial group to which he belongs is what it is. That group in turn would not be just what it is but for the influences playing upon it from other groups or a larger group of which it is a part. Human nature itself owes its structure to life in its more general forms. And life in general owes its nature to the manifold universe in which it flourishes. So it is with everything. Nothing is cut off so completely that it contains its being and nature within itself. All things owe their properties to some extent to the whole of which they are parts.

If the connections can never be completely severed that bind the individual to the universe and his isolation ren-

[18] Quoted from Moses, *op. cit.*, 86-87.

dered total, conversely neither can the whole carry its absorption of the part to the point where its individuality is wiped out. Man exists both as a part of the Absolute and also as a center of self-extermination or of creative activity. His life may be likened to that of a cell in the human body. The cell lives a double life; from the organism at large it takes up into itself the needed materials for its own self-renewal and coöperates with smaller and larger groups of cells to do its share in performing the biddings of the body. In addition it has the oversight of a world within itself on its hands. Human beings do not display the same proficiency as cells in the living of this double life. Our human powers of attention are circumscribed. Our human ability at good management is limited. They do not hold the balance true. They rob Peter to pay Paul. Overtime and attention given to the one are obtained at the expense of the other.

Prayer may be interpreted in terms of the above view of reality. By it the crust of selfhood is broken through and an inward condition acquired that enables the collective aspirations of the group to dominate the individual. Nor need we suppose that all the strength received in prayer is mediated through society. No doubt the bonds between the members of the same species are closer than those between the individual and reality as a whole. Nonetheless bonds are possible between the individual and the Cosmic Control. If reality is purposive, as we believe, is it unreasonable to take the stand that an attitude which will make an individual more sensitive to the purposes of the Cosmic Control, and enable him to draw greater strength from it, is within his reach? May we not think that letting down the bars of the ego establishes direct contact with the ultimate source of being, and therein lies the full and sufficient explanation of the effects which

follow in the wake of prayer? Prayer in this view is not regarded merely as the tapping of reserve supplies of energy within, though it does not exclude such interpretation; it is rather regarded as a means of drawing courage and energy from those sources which have given rise to man and all else that is.[19]

It is interesting to raise the question, does the view of prayer presented here compare with that taught by Jesus? It agrees with Jesus that reality may be trusted to see that basic human aspirations shall not turn out vain, and that the pains and labor of making these higher adjustments with it shall be infinitely rewarded. Jesus conveyed to us His attitude toward the ultimate nature of reality by calling it God and Father. Nature is the great creator and it continues to care and provide handsomely for those who seek spiritual blessings of it in the attitude of trust and confidence. The view of prayer presented above regards nature in the same way. Ferreting out the mechanisms employed in this process should not blind us to the fact that since the end or aim of the process is part and parcel of nature, nature must be more than a mechanical arrangement of parts; this purposive element makes it a spiritual whole any part of which can draw on the whole for legitimate aid. Yet there are those who feel that naming the psychological factors involved in prayer and relating them to other mental processes compels them to accept a mechanistic view of both prayer and reality. It is in this way that they become blind to the spiritual nature of reality.

If none of the foregoing interpretations of prayer is satisfactory to the reader he should seek one of his own. He should not be satisfied with a description of what

[19] For suggestions of this explanation of prayer see James, *op. cit.*, chapter on Mysticism, especially pages 393-4, 398 f, and 418 f.

occurs and with attaching to the various processes such names as suggestion, imagination and communication with the higher self. He must inquire why the processes occur and why they are effective, and that will take him into the realm of metaphysics. Psychologists should do this as part of their effort to make the facts they study intelligible.

SUMMARY. In this chapter prayer has been defined and classified and described from the psychological point of view. The question of the historical origin of prayer was declared to have little or no bearing on the conditions which prompt men to prayer, and the means they have employed in the effort to get answers to the problems put by them to their gods. Ways in which prayer may prove effective were presented. After stating the conditions indispensable to efficacy in prayer an attempt was made to explain why these conditions render prayer effective. This led to an effort to describe the nature or reality in a way that would make the facts of prayer intelligible.

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Chapter XIII

MYSTICISM

Definition. The diversity of definitions of mysticism and of judgments as to its worth make it advisable that we state our own at once. Mysticism denotes two things, —a kind of knowledge and a state of being.

There are in general three rival theories of knowledge —rationalism, empiricism, and mysticism. The theory that we possess forms of understanding which are not only independent of experience but also help to determine its nature is named rationalism. Knowledge according to this theory, therefore, is not derived wholly from experience; the forms of our understanding are themselves logically prior to all experience. Empiricism on the contrary asserts that all knowledge is the product of experience. Both of these theories are intellectualistic. They make knowledge a matter of clearly and consistently organized concepts. Mysticism challenges this position with an assertion that there is some knowledge not of the intellect. It holds that there is an insight of the heart as well as of the mind. Indeed it claims that the deeper things of life can be known only by feeling, a kind of intuition or immediate sensing of the truth, and it charges the intellect with falsifying the deeper facts of personality and of the spiritual order in which we live.

Mysticism is, however, not merely a form of insight and a source of knowledge. The mystic feels that he attains through his mystic experiences a new state of being. He is able both to break through the usual limi-

tations of rational knowledge and the usual limitations of commonplace existence. In mystic experiences the ego fades away and is replaced by an elevated and magnified self. Admittance into God's presence is a source of a new state of being that is indescribable. At times the mystic feels himself merged in God, and while thus in full accord with the highest of all realities, he may be led to exclaim, "God and I are one". The state of being experienced by the mystic may be diagnosed by an observer as due to a distension or expansion of personality carried to such a pitch that the usual distinction between the ego and the non-ego no longer obtains. The mystic becomes merged in perfect sympathy with all things, or if we prefer we may say all things have been absorbed in his own personality. The loss of individuality is accomplished by an elation and intensity of being known as ecstasy.

With these two points in mind the following definition is offered: Mysticism denotes the feeling of immediate contact between the individual and what he conceives to be the spiritual core of reality; in this contact he is convinced that a new and higher form of being has been enjoyed by him and from it a kind of knowledge secured that is higher and more certain than that obtained through the more usual intellectual processes.

Description and Classification of Mysticism. Mysticism is an element universal to religion. No religion is wholly a matter of conceptual knowledge. All religions rest in part on the immediate certainty of a divine revelation. While this is true, forms of mysticism vary greatly as to their content, effect on the mystic, and intensity. These three variables provide a convenient framework for a description of mysticism.

(1) The content of a mystic experience is some directly obtained and felt spiritual reality. But the account given

of it is conceived differently in different groups. Thus a Christian never has a vision of Mohammed in his mystic experiences; a Mohammedan is not likely to have a vision of Christ; and primitive men never have a vision of either. The religious training of the mystic determines the imagery in which he will recount his mystic experiences. For this reason the reports of mysticism among primitive peoples consist largely of dreams, trances, and hallucinations. Having no great background of what we would call theology and philosophy, their revelations must seem to come, whether in their dreams or waking states, from the spiritual beings they know, which are for the most part spirits of departed ancestors, though in many cases they seem to have inklings of the existence of a single great spirit.[1]

In more advanced religions the content of mystic experiences consists frequently in an immediate awareness of God's presence. At other times it may be the presence of one of God's representatives or his own human embodiment. The god of the mystic reveals himself in a way that confirms the faith of the mystic and increases his love.

In mystics of all religions, and especially among those in philosophical circles, there is a tendency to drop into pantheism. The content of the mystic experiences related by pantheists, like those of others, is determined by their previous habits of reflection. The pantheist believes beforehand in both the oneness and spiritual nature of all things. In his mystic experience faith turns to fact and he comes upon what he feels to be an immediate awareness that these beliefs are true. He loses himself in God regarded as the Absolute or the totality of being, he

[1] Moses, *Pathological Aspects of Religions,* 124.

tells us. Consciousness overflows its usual bounds, and the ego expands until all sense of self disappears just as one might lose himself in some unusually intense aesthetic experience. In the transition from detachment and disunion to attachment and union with the oneness of things the individual experiences a most intense moment. It is as if boundless content had been crowded into one brief instant.

This sort of mysticism is found in Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Neo-Platonism, and is shared by many Christian mystics of pantheistic tendencies. It may be regarded as a product native to pantheism, especially the form of pantheism found in Brahmanism. There is, believes the Brahman, only one Being. Nothing can be predicted of this Universal Soul. All that stands between that Universal Soul and any individual, however, is his own petty desires and limitations. From this disunion all evil results. The proper end of the individual, therefore, is to free himself from the limitations of individuality by acting upon his belief concerning the true nature of the universe and rising above desires that spring from bodily needs. When this purpose has been executed the individual may experience the joy that comes from feeling in the proper relation of union with the Absolute.

Nature worship is another attitude admirably suited to develop this type of mysticism, for the nature worshiper easily becomes a pantheist. His love and appreciation of the beauty of nature, as it reveals itself in its myriad of divine-like ways, trains him to see God everywhere. By setting nature into this frame his appreciation of it is so enhanced that he gets a revelation of truth and beauty denied others. This is why the great poets of nature have tended toward pantheism.

(2) Mysticism, as stated above, may also be studied to

advantage in terms of the effects produced by it. Some mystic experiences lead to increased and prolonged activity; some to its cessation and a passive life of meditation and contemplation. Among the Puritans and evangelical Protestants the active type is the dominating one; among Orientals and Catholics the passive type.

Whether mysticism shall be of the active or passive type is determined largely by the social ideals and religious training of the mystics concerned. In recent years, especially in Protestant circles, the passive type of mysticism has fallen into disrepute. For mysticism to justify itself in these circles it must manifest good fruits in a life of social service. Meditation and contemplation, and even correctness of belief, are regarded as of little consequence unless they lead to disinterested forms of activity. God Himself is thought of as living an active life of service. It is natural to expect, therefore, that the experience of the presence of God by a member of these circles will serve to stimulate him to greater zeal in self-sacrificing forms of activity.

In the Orient and among Catholics the importance of meditation, right belief, worship, and adoration is still stressed. God is pleased at the worship of His children, and one of the greatest goods that can come to man is time rightly spent in God's presence and in adoring Him. The state of being experienced in becoming at one with God is justification enough for mysticism; indeed it may well be regarded as the *summum bonum* of social service and of all other activity. Hence the Catholic and Oriental seek in their mystic experience for intimate contact with the source of all being and are spiritually blessed in the seeking as well as in its consummation.

It is to be noted that the above discussion points to the conclusion that mystic experiences are not so much

sources of new insight into the nature of reality as they are confirmations of views already accepted. The primitive man, the Christian, the Mohammedan, the pantheist —all are confirmed in the view of reality which they bring with them to their mystic experiences. Similarly neither the ideals of active service nor those of contemplation and meditation are an outcome of mystic experiences. Rather, the man who is already convinced that God desires above all things a life of service will find confirmation for his conviction in his mystic experiences. The same verdict of confirmation is received by those who value a life of meditation and contemplation.

(3) Mystic experiences present an endless gradation from very mild to the very extreme states that are known as ecstasy. Mild states of mysticism are such experiences as suddenly catch the inner meaning and significance of a proposition long intellectually accepted, the realization in a flash of the personal import and application of a comparatively well known principle, the feeling of divine presence experienced in prayer and worship. Again mystic experiences may become so intense that many striking changes occur in the moment of climax known as ecstasy.

The physical changes that occur in conjunction with ecstasy are striking, though varied. Ecstasy quiets some mystics and they become motionless; others it excites and they begin to move madly about. Boehme, the great German mystic, fell into a trance which lasted for seven days;[2] while Taury, a great Mohammedan mystic, ran wildly about on a field of newly cut wheat, and so lacerated his feet that he died in a few days.[3] Ecstasy is ex-

[2] *Ibid.*, 101.

[3] Field, *Mystics and Saints of Islam*, 16.

treme joy and, like extreme fear, may either paralyze completely or stimulate to most violent exertion.

During ecstasy sensibility may become lowered to a marked degree. Now and then a mystic's body becomes "rigid and insensible" to external impressions to such a degree that general sensibility becomes dormant.

> Neither pricking with pins nor burning with fire causes pain. There is also a suspension of other sensory activity: no sounds are heard, except in some cases the voice of one person, and the eyes, although open, do not see. These symptoms with the apparent unconsciousness resemble very much those of the cataleptic state. There are, however, two points of difference: contrary to appearances, consciousness is not lacking, and there is subsequent memory of events or visions experienced while in this state. Quite as often there is violent emotional excitement which manifests itself in impassioned words or songs, some of which are intelligible, as the ecstatic describes his visions, others not; his physiognomy may be expressive, and extravagant gesticulations and movements of the body take place, although he may not move from his position.[4]

The conscious states experienced during ecstasy are most interesting. Sheer joy of being reaches such a pitch of intensity that all else becomes negligible. Many mystics have regretted afterward the shortness of their period of rapture, yet others have felt that they could not stand it for a long period. Sometimes the ecstatic feels as if he has become disembodied, a condition apparently somewhat similar to that which is induced by hypnotism.

[4] Cutten, *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, 38.

Whether ecstasy is experienced by a theist or a pantheist a feeling accompanies it of a magnified self. For the pantheist the distinction between the ego and the non-ego is blotted out with the result, if his report of expanded feelings can be accepted at its face, that all is absorbed in the ego. The theist in his ecstasy may feel on the other hand that he has been signally favored of God or that he and God are one.

Thus Mohammed heard God say, "If it were not for thee, I would not have made the world."[5] St. Teresa heard God say that if He had not already made the world He would do so for her sake alone.[6] This self-magnifying power comes out even more clearly in the following instance: "When a man adores God," said Bustami, a great Mohammedan mystic of the ninth century, "God adores Himself." "I am a sea without bottom, without beginning, without end," he cried, "I am the throne of God, the world of God. I am Gabriel, Michael, Israfil; I am Abraham, Moses, Jesus."[7] This pinnacle of abandon is reached by Meister Eckhart, a great German mystic of the fourteenth century:

> I declare by good truth and truth everlasting that in every man who hath utterly abandoned self, God must communicate Himself according to His power, so completely that He retains nothing in His life, in His essence, in His nature, in His Godhead—He must communicate all to the bringing forth of fruit . . . God in Himself was not God—in the creature only hath He become God. . . . God and I are one in Knowing . . . The eye whereby I see God is the

[5] Field, *op. cit.*, 203.

[6] Moses, *op. cit.*, 94.

[7] Quoted from Moses, *op. cit.*, 77.

same eye whereby He seeth me. Mine eye and the eye of God are one eye, one vision, one knowledge, and one love.[8]

Such passages make it clear that no diminution of personality takes place. The self is lost but lost because it has been swallowed up in the loss of the distinction between self and not-self. Instead of depriving the mystic of his feelings of personal worth it magnifies them by its inclusion of all things within the self. The following verses of Angelus Silesius further illustrate this point:

I am as great as God, and He as small as I;
He cannot me surpass, or I beneath Him lie.
God cannot, without me, endure a moment's space,
Were I to be destroyed, He must give up the ghost.
Nought seemeth high to me, I am the highest thing;
Because e'en God Himself is poor deprived of me.

Moses, from whom this quotation is taken,[9] goes on to add:

This sounds like mere bombast and arrogant self-deification, but it was not so intended. Silesius sang of his blissful union with God, whom he literally loved to distraction, and in whom his whole being lived, and moved, and had its existence.

Favorable Conditions for Producing the Mystic Experience. Obviously the factors previously found essential for conversion are important pre-conditions of the

[8] *Ibid.*, 85 f.
[9] *Ibid.*, 126.

mystic experience. In any given group it is those who desire and expect to be converted and are passively suggestible who will in all likelihood undergo that striking religious experience. These are also very important conditioning factors for one who wishes to have a mystic experience. Indeed without them there is little possibility of obtaining it. All the mystics have emphasized the importance of intense desire. Unless a candidate desires to come in immediate contact with the spiritual order enough to give up sensual pleasures of all kinds, he cannot follow the mystic way. Moreover desire by itself, the mystics teach, is not sufficient—there must also be expectancy or faith. And psychologists have discovered that passive suggestibility is a condition favorable to such experiences.

Repressed desires set up a condition favorable to mystical experiences. The influence of repressed sex desires is clearly present in mystic experiences described by the mystics themselves.[10] Many students, particularly the

[10]Mme. Guyon illustrates this in her utterances: "'I wish the Divine love, the love which chills the soul with ineffable shivers, the love which puts me in a swoon.' And later, when she had experienced the mystic union with God, she wrote, 'O! my God, if you should make the most sensual persons feel what I feel, they would soon leave their false pleasures to enjoy one so true.'" St. Teresa, illustrates the same: "Suffering from a headache, she sought, for the glory of God, to relieve herself by holding certain odoriferous substances in her mouth, when the Lord appeared to her to lean over towards her lovingly, and to find comfort Himself in these odors. After having gently breathed them in, He arose, and said with a gratified air to the Saints, as if contented with what He had done: 'See the new present which my betrothed has given Me!'

"One day at chapel, she heard supernaturally sung, the words, '*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.*' The Son of God leaning towards her like a sweet lover, and giving to her soul the softest kiss, said to her at the second Sanctus: 'In this *Sanctus* addressed to my person, receive with this kiss all the sanctity of my divinity and of my humanity, and

psychoanalysts, have exaggerated the influence of repressed sex desires, and exaggerated them in a way to throw discredit upon the mystic experience. It is well, therefore, for us to keep in mind that since the love of human beings is intimately related with sex, any form of intense love will have sex elements in it. Moreover this should not cause us to think less of the experience. Life in dividing itself into sexes adopted a course that has added to existence infinite beauty and charm. Why should surprise be expressed therefore, that an individual who has centered all his love on God should speak of his love in a way which indicates the presence of sex elements in it? His whole being is wrapped up in his love for God. What form of sublimated love is higher than this? Moreover, since the language of love is the language of sex love, how could the mystics express the raptures they experienced except in this language?

Another aspect of the relation between repressed desires and the mystic experience remains to be considered. Admitting that repressions create a condition favorable to mystic experiences, we raise the question, What causes the mystics to practice repressions? If the mystics are to be trusted at all, it is a great love of God that causes

let it be to thee a sufficient preparation for the approaching communion table'." (Quoted from Moses, *op. cit.*, 16).

The description Henry Suso gives of one of his experiences is also interesting: "'I looked and behold the body about my heart was as clear as crystal, and I saw the Eternal Wisdom calmly sitting in my heart in lovely wise; and close by that form of beauty my soul leaning on God, embraced by His arms, pressed to His heart, full of heavenly longing, transported, intoxicated with love.'

"The Eternal Reason speaks and these are her words: 'I am the throne of joy, I am the crown of bliss. Mine eyes are so bright, my mouth so tender, my cheeks so rosy-red, and all my form so winning fair, that were a man to abide in a glowing furnace till the Last Day, it would be a little price for a moment's vision of my beauty'." (Quoted from Swisher, *Religion and the New Psychology*, 93).

them to attempt to uproot their carnal desires in order to serve Him all the more devotedly. Many of the mystics were men of the world who abandoned a life of sense indulgence in order to spend their lives serving God. In such cases clearly the resolution to seek after God preceded and so could not have been due to the repressions. It was for the aid that it might be in carrying on a search after God already begun that they decided to abandon all sense indulgence. If remnants of the deeply implanted sex cravings which they were unable to uproot from their natures, find an outlet in their later fantasies, this should not blind us to the nobility of their underlying motives and the greatness of their sacrifice.

Another favorable condition for mystic experiences is a neurotic taint. The practical man of affairs, whose attention is fully and satisfactorily occupied with external matters, finds the world good as it is and is not likely to become a mystic. The man to whom the storm and stress of life prove so painful that he withdraws from it, to create in his solitude an imaginary world in which his desires can be satisfied is obviously much more in line to obtain a mystic experience. The mystics are recruited from the ranks of dissatisfied and perhaps over-tender souls. The healthy-minded, to use James' expression, are not likely to follow the mystic way.

Lastly, environment is an important factor in producing mystic experiences. Membership in a group that values mystic experiences and honors those who have them is a more favorable soil for them than membership in a group devoted to the acquisition of wealth or to scientific discovery. A culture given over to an otherworldly attitude is also fertile ground for mystic experiences. If the members of a group agree that this world is of no importance, if all that they value is safely stored

in another world which they call the spiritual, it is obvious that the practice of the mystic way will be more general and accompanied by a greater percentage of success among them than it will be among people who are bent on making this world a more satisfying place for man.

Methods of Producing the Mystic Experiences. Similarities between mystic experiences and certain experiences induced by drugs have been noted by James.[11] Other writers call attention to the similarities between mystic experiences and hypnosis.[12] Sometimes mystic experiences have been induced by the subject working himself into a frenzy with the aid of music or through wild acrobatic movements of the body. Fasting also has been widely practiced because a famished state of the body seems conducive to experiencing visions. A heightened state of personality which has been induced by concentrating upon one's individuality may also give rise to mystic experiences. Tennyson seems to have been able to produce them easily in this way.

> In a letter to a friend he writes: "I have never had any revelations through anaesthetics; but a kind of waking trance (this for lack of a better word) I have frequently had from boyhood when I have been all alone. This has often come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality the individuality seemed itself to dissolve and fade away into boundless being,—and this not a confused state but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words—where death was almost a laughable

[11] *Varieties of Religious Experiences,* 386 f.

[12] Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals,* Chapter XI.

> impossibility—the loss of personality (if so it were) seeing no extinction but the only true life.[13]

If however we are to understand the place of mysticism in religion we must deal with it in its religious setting. We must deal with its forms as a fruit of religious practices rather than with it as a form of intoxication produced by drugs, or of elation induced by hypnosis. While there are many similarities between these states and those of mysticism, we cannot hold, unless we are willing to maintain that the background of an experience has nothing to do with the conscious content of the experience, that true mystic experiences are altogether similar to the states produced by drugs or intoxication. For this reason it seems advisable to concentrate on the ways mystics themselves have travelled in reaching their mystic states.

Mystic experiences, as already pointed out, are of many degrees. A very mild form is found frequently in conjunction with ordinary prayers. Beginning with this mild form he who is seeking to advance on the mystic way must dwell on the thought of God's presence; he should try to imagine God standing close to him. This must be supplemented by constant reminding of the love and care of God in order to nurture a greater love for God within himself.[14] He must keep up his anxiety to discover God's will, and do all he can to stimulate and strengthen his faith that God will directly reveal Himself. When he has created and established these attitudes he must await quietly, with every muscle relaxed and his breathing restricted, the vision that has become the object of so great a desire.

[13] Quoted from Moses, *op. cit.*, 120.

[14] See Wright, *A Student's Philosophy of Religion,* chapter on Mysticism.

The above course is the way taken by the Christian who cultivates the mystic experience. A believer in an impersonal substitute for a personal God would proceed in the same way, through the ideational content of his discipline would be different. The Brahman, for instance, would be advised to focus his attention upon the oneness of things and to dwell upon the illusion and evils of detached existence. He would convince himself that he should escape from this illusion and merge himself in the Absolute. He would imagine the desired state and give himself up completely to its contemplation, for by making himself passive to this extent he abolishes somewhat the distinction between the ego and non-ego, and thus paves the way for the transition that will merge him in the Absolute. In doing all this he acts essentially on the same psychological principles as the Christian. He prays and meditates; he cultivates assiduously the belief that in the imagined state he will find relief from all the evils of life and a joy of unbounded satisfaction.

The key to the understanding of the mystic experience lies in the uses to which it puts the imagination, intense desire, expectancy, and the projective mechanism. The mystic imagines a certain state of being, he centers attention and desire on it, he expects to be favored with attainment of the condition imagined, he bends the projective mechanism of the mind to his purpose, and in the end his desire is satisfied. The processes involved are clearly illustrated in stigmatization and demon possession.

Stigmatization. By stigmatization is meant receiving in a state of ecstasy wounds corresponding to those Christ received in His body during His crucifixion. Two of the clearest cases are those of St. Francis, in 1224, and of St. Catherine, in 1370. In both the procedure involved was practically the same. Both had meditated long on the

suffering of Christ and yearned to suffer with Him. To be allowed to do so they thought would be to receive a mark of divine favor as well as be a fitting way to show their love. One day the long continued meditations of St. Francis bore fruit and he was favored with a vision of Christ on the cross. In the midst of pondering over what this might mean he went into ecstasy. When he came out of it he possessed the coveted marks. No doubt the vision of Christ on the cross served to intensify his faith that his prayers were about to be answered. St. Catherine's marks were acquired in a similar way. One day, after receiving the sacraments, she fell into a trance during which she witnessed the passion of Christ. From His wounds there streamed floods of light. When she came to herself she found wounds on her body corresponding to those of Christ.[15]

Demon Possession. It is not unusual for a person to feel as if he were possessed by a spirit. The spirit may be good or evil but the mechanism involved will be the same. The psychology of spirit possession is simple. Very few personalities are perfectly unified or integrated. At times, as pointed out in previous chapters, a secondary personality arises. Its victims dramatize this struggle within themselves. When the secondary personality in control is evil, what in the language of demonology is called demon possession occurs. On these occasions such an individual may suffer torments. Thus, for example, a man named Achille, according to Janet, one day leaped from his bed crying: "They are burning me—they are cutting me to pieces." On regaining consciousness he felt himself to be possessed of a devil. Cutten, from whom this quotation is taken, adds by way of comment:

[15] For an account of Stigmatization see Cutten, *op. cit.*, Chapter VIII; see also section on Suggestibility in Chapter II above.

> The disaggregation of consciousness, or a split in personality, with an insistent idea in the secondary consciousness, is all that science needs today to furnish a case of demoniacal possession as fiendish as the most fastidious could wish.[16]

The mechanism involved is the same where presence or possession is felt to be by a good spirit. In the one case desire is the motive force back of suggestive influences; in the other, fear. Both desire and fear it has already been shown are powerful conditioning factors for the functioning of suggestion and the mind's projective mechanism.

Mystic experience, however, are not always of the sort just described. Sometimes the mystic hears voices or has visions. This too is of common occurrence in certain mental disorders, which enables the mechanism employed to be carefully studied. The victims of this disorder are usually paranoiacs, that is, suffers from delusions of persecution or of magnified importance. They frequently hear people calling them names or cursing them. Or they may hear voices and are unable to tell from whom or where the sound comes. Or they may see hell open before them.[17] Those who are of a religious turn and suffer from feelings of magnified importance may hear God delivering them some commission, or expressing His approval of them. Both forms are instances of the activity of the projective mechanism. In one case a state of anxiety, worry, and fear becomes metamorphosed after projection into events which justify the originating mental perturbation. In the other a state of self-impor-

[16] Cutten, *op. cit.*, 115, 117.

[17] See "Case of Jack" and "Case of Jim," reported by Dr. Fay in *Psychoanalytic Review*, February, 1922.

tance, of great desire for divine favor, after its projection abroad returns laden with spoil satisfying to the patient. It is obvious that this same mechanism plays an important part in the mystic experience. The mystic works up a consuming desire for a well defined experience; he holds his mind at attention before it with all the powers at his command; he builds up an attitude of expectancy that it will happen to him. Out of these conditions the mystic experiences are born.

Viewing the mystic experience from the standpoint of psychology in this way should not diminish our appreciation of its values or of the motives that prompt the mystics. It is obvious that whatever happens must be describable. It is the task of science to discover, describe, and explain the mechanisms or processes involved. For this purpose extreme cases serve rather better than the more commonplace. Accordingly this study has singled out extreme cases, but has done so in the interests of a better understanding of the more commonplace mystic experiences, such as those obtained in prayer, worship, or sudden appreciation of the meaning and worth of things. Even so when science has described as best it can the conditions that favor the mystic experience and the psychological mechanisms involved, the question as to its value or worth remains to be discussed. To this question we now turn.

Value of Mysticism. Some serious charges have been brought against mysticism. It cannot be disputed that many mystics, in the language of one of the greatest of their number, have mistaken laziness for holy contemplation. Mysticism also risks the danger of taking the deliverances of an overexcited imagination for the commands of God. This was admitted by the great mystics of the Middle Ages who urged the necessity of search-

ing efforts to discover the source of the mystic revelation, whether from God or from the devil. It is also clear that mysticism may stray across into the pathological and sponsor practices that would otherwise be spurned by bringing an assurance that they possess God's approval. When the sole guide to conduct is one's own private meditations, all sorts of moral aberrations may well be expected. Finally, it cannot be denied that during the Dark and Middle Ages men who were needed in active life in too many instances withdrew from society to live a life of contemplation.

Yet in spite of the dangers and defects of mysticism, it has been hitherto and remains one powerful source of man's spiritual progress. In the classification of mysticism in terms of its effects it was pointed out that a life of greater activity follows in the wake of some mystic experiences, and that some find their end in months and years of meditation, worship, and love. Nothing need be said as to the value of the former type since our age sufficiently appreciates anything which promotes useful activity. But the danger is real of failure to appreciate the value of the passive type of mysticism.

Mysticism of the passive type is valuable in three ways: (1) It makes for personal development: (2) The experience is valuable in itself; and (3) It is a source of religious vitality.

(1) The emphasis of mysticism on meditation, contemplation, love, and worship makes for personal development. Hours spent in contemplating and loving what is conceived to be the highest spiritual reality do not leave us as they find us. They stimulate new devotion in us to our ideals; and hence lead to new insights, for what our moral perceptions shall be depends largely on the values we cherish. If our moral values change our perceptions

change accordingly. But what is personality but a compound of our values, aspirations, and habits of perception and action? To the extent, then, that time spent in meditation and worship increases our love of the things of the spirit, to that extent does it make for our personal development.

(2) The mystic experience is valuable in itself. It needs no external justification. Its own nature renders it intrinsically valuable. All who believe in intrinsic values at all will probably agree that loyalty, love, and devotion to what one conceives to be right should be regarded as intrinsic values. These are some of the things we most admire. Indeed, may they not be regarded as the characteristics which make development of personality worth while? Now mysticism is an expression of loyalty, love, and devotion to what one conceives to be right. Shall we say that these become valueless when expended on what is conceived to be their most worthy object? To say so would mean to find no value of consequence in the moral will of man, nothing in his spiritual aspirations to admire. But he who denies these things are valuable should feel it his duty to tell us what then in man is valuable.

Mystic experiences are also valuable in themselves on account of their joyousness. Surely happiness and joy are intrinsic goods. The mystics report during their mystic experiences a joy and happiness that defies description. They feel the rapture of a new intensity of being; they are elevated and glorified. They are conscious of a new state of being, which is of infinitely greater value than commonplace existence. How can it be justly said that such experiences, growing as they do out of a great love for what is conceived to be the highest spiritual reality, are not valuable?

(3) Mysticism is a source of religious vitality. Apart from the renewed insight and sustained enthusiasm supplied by mystics historical religion would have been poor indeed; and apart from the love stimulated by mysticism the zeal of religious workers would have been measurably less. The greatness of the love that may be evoked for God is illustrated in the lives of many mystics, but in none more clearly than in Rabia, the great Sufi mystic who could say: "My God, if on the day of judgment, Thou sendest me to hell, I shall reveal a secret which will make hell fly far from me."[18] This meant that her only concern was that the will of God should be supreme; if it pleased Him to send her to hell, her happiness in knowing that His will was being fulfilled would make her no fit inhabitant.

Mysticism has also been of value as an example to more ordinary members of society. They are too much occupied with projects to make life easy to discover new depths of meaning to life or to develop life from within. Storing up wealth and improving sanitary conditions are good, but so are those experiences which dignify life and provide food for man's spiritual development. The example set by the great army of mystics needs to be cherished. It constitutes a great spiritual heritage. The knowledge that we are akin to men who have devoted their lives to lonely meditation in the effort to understand more clearly the spiritual nature of the universe in which they lived is an inspiration. Grant that they did not succeed.

> Yet it is precisely this ceaseless striving, this irresistible impulse after something higher, this unquenchable thirst for the fountain-head of knowl-

[18] Field, *op. cit.*, 35.

> edge which constitutes the highest and noblest side of humanity, and is the most indubitable pledge of its spiritual future. The net result of these strivings has been an endless series of self-delusions, and yet humanity takes on a grander aspect in them than in all its other manifold efforts and successes. The history of this spiritual wrestling, this hopeless and yet never relaxed struggle against the impossible, forms the noblest aspect of the history of mankind.[19]

Appreciation and understanding of mysticism go hand in hand with a new appreciation of man's moral and spiritual nature. The mystics would be our great benefactors if they had done nothing else than to show us what unsuspected capacity for moral effort we possess, and to give a demonstration of a different way of life from the one that appeals so powerfully to the crowd today. The mystics in constantly reminding us that "man shall not live by bread alone" have placed us under obligation. They have done more. They have added to our understanding of the universe.

Trustworthiness of the Mystic's Findings. Are the mystic experiences, as stated by Field, above, an endless series of self-delusions? Take some of the simpler forms of mysticism. When poet or pantheist sees and feels God everywhere, is he deluded? When the lover sees charms in the beloved that no one else sees, is he deluded? Is the mystic who has a vision of God or a revelation deluded?

Before answering the last question, an inquiry is necessary into what it means to have a revelation from God. Certainly much of the content of mystic visions is due to self-delusion. The content seems clearly determined by

[19] *Ibid.*, 10.

the material which the imagination of any particular mystic has to work with. Hence, if seeing God means having a picture of Him as one might have of a man, we should not hesitate to say that this is a delusion. But to say this and stop there, misses the real import of mysticism. It is to mistake the dress of one's spiritual experiences for the experiences themselves. Mystical experiences cannot be regarded as revealing to us a transcendental God. Mystics delude themselves when they think this to be the case. But if mystical experiences are viewed as actual and intimate human contact with the spiritual and moral nature of the universe, they are not delusions. For in these experiences the highest spiritual activities of the universe become immediately aware of themselves. The mystic has a direct revelation of the spiritual order of reality. This is the reason that his faith in the moral order is so greatly strengthened. Christ, Mohammed, the Virgin, or Nirvana may be the form or setting given to the revelation; but in each case the mystic becomes immediately aware of the moral nature of the universe. He senses it in himself.

Some of the greatest mystics seem to have accepted this understanding of the situation, especially the Buddhist and philosophical mystics. And some of the greatest Christian mystics have not lagged behind them. For example, Emerson writes: "The simplest person, who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet forever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable."[20] When man looks within himself and sees there his moral will striving after the higher and nobler he comes into immediate contact with God, or the moral order. Mystic experiences are essentially

[20] Quoted from Moses, *op. cit.*, 123.

those experiences through which man comes to the immediate awareness of God through the active nobility of his own nature. They are not then self-delusions. They are experiences which reveal to man one of the truest aspects of reality.

Preparation is necessary for mystic experiences. There are those who maintain that this time is spent in the development of the delusions. It takes time, so their reasoning runs, for the fantasies to develop. This is a very superficial viewpoint. Of course it takes time. It takes time to learn to use a microscope. High enjoyment of the beauty of poetry takes time and practice. It takes time to learn to see anything with the eyes of appreciation. Should we expect then without meditation and contemplation to detect and become aware of the meaning, and order and purposiveness of nature? Should we expect anyone to be convinced without effort and training of the moral nobility of man and to think of himself as a result as a part of God's being? Should we expect anyone without time and practice to break through the limitations of his individuality and feel himself lost in the totality of being?

Bergson has taught us that research may proceed either by concentrating the mind, sharpening its edge as it were, or by letting the ego distend or relax so as to establish a closer though less interested contact with reality. The latter is more like the mystic's way. What non-mystic is able to say that the mystic who claims to have sensed the nature of reality immediately and established an immediate union with it by letting the ego distend is suffering from hallucinations. If the materialist is right in his stand that there is no spiritual side to reality, then mysticism can fairly be called a delusion. But if the idealist is right in his claim that nature does possess a teleological

and moral order, we may well hesitate to say that contact with it cannot be immediately felt by those who have trained themselves for this purpose. If the idealist is right, there is no proof that the mystic cannot immediately feel and recognize the kinship between himself and nature. Also if reality is one, as most philosophers claim, then the mystic may be right in saying that he feels himself in unmediated union with the oneness and unity of being and thus loses his individuality in its totality.

Finally it should be noted that the mystic experience does not add new content to the mystic's store of beliefs and ideals. The Mohammedan is already a believer in the hour of his mystic experience of Mohammed; the Christian has accepted Christ before his mystic experience of Christ; the pantheist is already convinced that reality is one spiritual whole before he becomes immediately sensible of this unity in a mystic experience. Mystic experiences, then, are not revelations of new truth; they are confirmations of beliefs already entertained. Instead of questioning the trustworthiness of the findings, reported by the mystic, we should examine the beliefs entertained in advance by them regarding the nature of reality. While these of course differ in important respects, they agree in giving an idealistic interpretation of reality, an interpretation which has been the one favored by the reflective thought of man as embodied in his philosophy. Instead of thinking of mysticism as a means of research and discovery of new truth, we should rather think of it as a confirmation by the feelings and imagination of the view of the universe obtained by rational processes. Whether that view is true or false must be determined by further rational inquiry for such an inquiry is outside the province of mysticism.

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Chapter XIV

CONCLUSION

The thoughtful observer of religious phenomena in all their great variety no doubt has in mind a number of questions to ask: What is the meaning and purpose of it all? Is the religious view of reality true? If so, in what sense? What of the future of religion? While questions like these do not strictly belong within the province of a psychological inquiry, yet they are of such human interest that a discussion of them should be of help to a better understanding of religion.

Meaning or Purpose of Religion. The meaning or purpose of religion has been indicated indirectly throughout this volume. Yet the explicit consideration of it may prove helpful. Just what do questions regarding meaning and purpose signify? When a man who has been insulted raises the question, What is the meaning of this? we expect a definite sort of answer. So also when a camper who discovers his companion packing his things preparatory to leaving raises the question, What does this mean, the kind of an answer he expects is plain. Equally clear is the drift of the same question when put to a group of men laboring upon some engineering project. In all these cases the questioner is after the reason, the motive, back of the act. The meaning of the act lies in the purpose or end sought to be realized.

Likewise when the question regarding the meaning of religion is asked, it betokens a desire to understand why men perform certain types of activity. Why, for in-

stance, do men pray, meet together to worship, and strive in various other group ways for their moral and spiritual development? These questions have been already considered. Men do these things because they answer to and satisfy certain fundamental cravings and needs in man. When we have singled out why some men perform certain specfic religious acts, in one sense the question regarding the meaning and purpose of religion has been answered.

Some of those who raise this question however, may not be satisfied to stop at this answer based on the satisfaction of cravings of human nature. They may wish to inquire also why human nature is so constituted that indulgence in religious behavior is natural to it. Or framing the question differently, Why were needs and aspirations given to men which prompt them to act religiously? The answer to this second question requires that a cosmic setting be given to the behavior of man. While no decisive answer perhaps can be given and all answers are admittedly highly speculative, yet it is well that they be presented and considered. They serve to open our eyes to the intricate problems connected with the ultimate nature of reality, and save us from accepting hurriedly an oversimplified metaphysic.

Why is man a being endowed with aspirations that give rise to the religious life? Unless we care to think that man is detached from the universe, an answer to this question must commit us to the acceptance of a teleological view of reality. Refuse to think that man is an accident and we are debarred from thinking that his aspirations are something foreign to the nature of the cosmos. Instead we must think them to be a growth rooted in the nature of the cosmos. This gives us the clue that we need to the nature of reality. Reality is through and

through a spiritual unity. It is a purposive whole, and its purposes are finding expression in all phenomena but especially in the aspirations of man.

Hence it is that the answer to the question, Why is man religious? is couched in terms of the nature of the Absolute. If a third question is raised, Why is the Absolute what it is? the reply is that we feel no need of answering. We feel no need because the cravings of man to find cosmic support for the values and purposes by which he sets such store are met by the answer to the previous question. It gives man the privileged place in the cosmos which he craves; he finds the values which he esteems most highly at home in the universe. Hence the emotional need of pushing inquiry further disappears. Moreover we feel no need of answering because the answer to the previous question meets our intellectual needs. After the particular has been related to the most inclusively general, further explanation is not only recognized to be futile but the demand for it is meaningless.

Briefly stated, the meaning and purpose of religion may be expressed in terms of the motives and ends served by it, considered from the merely human point of view. Or this problem may be given a cosmic range, in which case religion becomes one of the ways that the purpose and ends of the cosmos seek realization.

Truth of Religion. In discussing the truth of religion it is well to bear in mind that "true" in this connection is used in two senses. "True" may be used humanistically, in the sense that it is the right or best solution. For instance, the true solution of a moral problem which has arisen, may well be regarded as the solution that meets the situation best. The true solution is the solution tributary to the greatest good of the parties concerned. "True" is at times, however, used differently. At times its hu-

manistic connotations are gone. Indeed it may be regarded as something which may possibly crush what men esteem to be high human values. "True" in this sense is something impersonal, something without reference to human wants or needs. It is an eternal verity. It refers to internal consistency between ideas. It refers to a correspondence between ideas and reality. It is the conception of truth that the scientist respects in his reverence for *fact*. Bertrand Russell had it in mind when he wrote, "Truth looks into the mouth of hell and is not afraid."

These two meanings of truth should be borne in mind when the truth of religion is under discussion, for questions raised concerning the truth of religion sometimes refer to truth in the first sense and sometimes to truth in the other sense. Moreover religion must be believed to be true in both senses if religious behavior is to remain a practice worthy of man, or one which will increasingly promote his spiritual welfare.

It is obvious that religion must be thought to be a true way to work out the progress of man if it is to be worthy of man. Unless those who practice religion think that it makes for human welfare—that is, unless they think it right—they are morally damned for the practice. For they are deliberately doing that which they think is not good. Hence a religious devotee must either believe that religion is true in the first sense or be false to the highest in man, namely, his moral will. It is also clear that religion cannot function in a wholly satisfactory manner unless one believes that it is true in the second sense. Discord between any-one's religion and his total view of reality gives rise to disconnected mental compartments. In one will be housed religious beliefs; in the other, scientific knowledge. Such a division is a highly unsatis-

factory condition of things. But that religion even under this handicap can prove somewhat fruitful has been proven in numerous cases of divided selves. This may be due to the fact that religion sinks its roots so deep in the will to live and in the will to progress that intellectual doubts are insufficient to make it entirely powerless. Nonetheless if the whole personality can accept it as true it will function much more satisfactorily.

It is difficult to think that those who discuss so lightly and glibly the truth or falsity of religion understand fully the implications of what they say. What nature would reality have to possess for religion to be false? Specific dogmas, we all admit, may be false, but when the truth of religion itself is questioned the matter stands differently. Religions in general have been based on a dualistic or idealistic metaphysic, and if reality is truly pictured by the dualist or idealist, there can be no question as to the truth of religion. But would an out-and-out mechanistic view of reality make religion false? Suppose the universe is but the play of matter moving according to fixed laws: suppose man is but a happy accident in the limitless number of forms it has created and destroyed, what then? Could religion continue to be carried on as a fruitful enterprise by man? Obviously readjustments in the values and concepts of religion would have to be made, but could they be made and could religion adapt itself and continue to be worth keeping up? The religion of Stoicism which grew out of a materialistic metaphysic should be recalled in this connection. If the laws in cosmic control of nature are our creators; if they are also the source of all that we value; if they provide us in addition with the means of making our human will more and more fully felt in our world—even though for a brief time cosmically considered—should we not feel

grateful? However it be conceived, does not the source of life and of mind merit our reverence? The joys of life and its needs are what they are in any case. The man who feels that life is good must give gratitude to something for his being; he must worship; he must identify himself with the more self-sufficing. If this something should turn out to be differently constituted from what he has imagined, what of it? Would that render the religious life false?

The possibilities of a religion founded even on a materialistic view are not to be despised. A materialistic metaphysic produces a feeling of peace, security, and power. It contains no foreign powers of evil to vex men. Men need only to control nature for their own purposes. If the issue be raised concerning the ultimate fate of man, it invites him to be heroic, to face fate with an unconquerable will. And the anticipated fate of man itself may supply leverage for a powerful appeal to men to love each other more, and to realize to the full all possible values here and now. This is made beautifully clear by Otto in *Things and Ideals*:

> It is predicted that as the earth now sleeps every year for a winter, as we sleep every day for a night, so by and by the earth shall refuse to awake, as we rest at last in sleep that nothing disturbs. It is predicted that then the uninhabited earth shall, like the moon, "roll its pale corpse in space," until it collides with the no-longer procreant sun, and the whole lifeless mass, ignited by the terrific shock, shall burst, to float a gigantic fiery veil in the boundless vast.
>
> Let it be so. Meanwhile millions upon millions of human beings will strive and suffer and enjoy. They will suffer more and more and enjoy less and less,

> or suffer less and less and enjoy more and more. And the chief source of their misery or happiness will be human beings and the structure of society. It will be defeat if in the distant future the coöperative adventure of making human life richer and happier is interrupted by a change in the cosmic weather, but a kind of defeat which is at the same time the highest form of victory. *Real* defeat will overtake humanity only in so far as men themselves, forgetting that they are comrades in doom and agents of each other's woe or weal, go down the years estranged from the one friend they have—each other.[1]

Here as with the Stoics a materialistic metaphysic gives rise to a religion of humanity. May we not expect that it will also take over the Stoic's reverence for the universal law, the source of all being?

If religion can attach itself to any view of reality and bend it to the service of human needs, then the question of the truth of religion appears to be one of little if any force or meaning. It is a question that may properly be asked regarding particular beliefs of a religion. Religion here is on the same footing as science. Questions as to a particular finding of science may be raised. But it would be meaningless to raise questions regarding the truth of science. Science as the pursuit of knowledge is not shown to be false by its errors. So with religion. It may incorporate within itself errors. But religion as the attempt to develop the best there is in man, as the attempt to ennoble and enrich human nature, as the determination to face heroically that which must come—

[1] *Loc. cit.*, 293.

whether it is a doom sent by the hand of God or by the agency of mechanical laws—religion as the means of uniting men into closer bonds and making them more sensitive to the worth of their fellows can never be shown to be false by reflections on the ultimate nature of reality. Man will continue to be religious no matter how his conceptions of nature may change. Serious-minded men with noble aspirations are going to continue to engage in activities that are religious even though they should believe that tomorrow ends all. To live today with the maximum of their power, to make the present as rich and beautiful as possible—these are ideals that will always animate the loftier spirits of the race.

Future of Religion. The future of religion hinges on the nature of man. As long as man remains what he is, that is, as long as his nature is animated by its present urge to strive upward and to make the best of things, there will be religion. Particular dogmas may be discarded, and they must be if religion is to serve to the fullest extent possible the spiritual growth of man. Just as in the past religion has been spiritualized and morally elevated at each stage of a truer and more adequate understanding of the nature of reality and of man, so we can look forward with confidence to religion making use of future growth in knowledge and insight to free itself of all superstitutions, for in so doing it will serve best its great purpose of freeing and elevating the race of man.

THE END

INDEX

A

Abstinence from pleasure as ascetic practice, 256.
Accomplishment and immortality, 136.
Action, as subjective characteristic of religion, 51.
Admiration, as a source of religion, 78.
Adolescence, characteristics of, 161-165.
  in relation to conversion, 197.
Adolescent, dogmatic tendency, 175-176.
  religious development of the, 160-161.
    difficulties of, 165-179.
Adult, the, and the youth, 164-165.
Adults, baptism of, 222.
Admiration and high ideals, 242.
Aestheticism and cult practices, 213-214.
Affection, as phase of religion, 51.
  characteristics of, 54-55.
Altruism, and the individual, 152-153.
  and the youth, 178.
Anger as unification factor in congregations, 244-245.
Arguments, metaphysical, and immortality, 129.
  as road to belief in God, 99.
Asceticism, 7-8, 250-284.
  and human nature, 276-278.
  and other disciplines, 254.
  and pathology, 251.
  and psychoanalysis, 252.
  and self-expression, 252.
  as a cult practice, 50.
  as a substitute for ritual sacrifice, 250.
  compared to prayer, 285.
  conceptual sources and motives of, 267-276.
  definition of, 250.
  examples of, 257-258.
  in religion, 66.
  instinctive sources and motives of, 260-267.
  motivation of, 254-255.
  need of, 252-254.
  normal and abnormal, 278-280.
  practices of, 254-260.
  present unpopularity of, 251-254.
  social value of, 251-252.
  value of, 278-284.
Ascetics, medieval, 275.
Ashville Citizen, The, 201.
Aspiration, as subjective characteristic of religion, 51, 54.
  explanation of human, 342-343.
Astrology and prayer, 296.
Atonement and asceticism, 262-263.
Attention, fixation of, and efficacy of prayer, 308.
Australia, belief in moral order in, 51-52.
Authority and disbelief in God, 109.
Awe in religion, 56.

B

Baptism, rite of, 221-222.
Beauty and belief in God, 113.
Behaviorism and personality, 16.
Belief, as subjective characteristic of religion, 51.

as proof of validity of religion, 82.
in God, 95-121.
causes of, 97-103.
in relation to moral order, 52.
obstacles to, 105-109.
in gods and spirits and religion, 63-64.
in immortality and religion, 64.
in moral order, 66 and God, 96.
Beliefs and ideals, value of, 53-54.
emphasis of, by song, 218.
need of coördination of, 239.
organization of, by preacher, 239-242.
present attitude toward, 239.
Bergson, Henri, 17, 102, 338.
Bible, as source of spiritual truth, 233-234.
interpretation, difficulty of, 233.
through individual conscience, 234.
modern adaptation of, 234.
understanding background of, 234.
Birth, primitive interpretation of, and immortality, 125.
Boehme, 320.
Brahman method of mystic experience, 329.
Brahmanism and pantheistic mysticism, 318.
Brooks, C. H., 310.
Brown, Dean, 130-131.
Buddhism and gods and spirits, 64.
Buddhist belief in moral order, 52.
Bustami, 322.

C

Catalepsy, compared to mystic ecstasy, 321.
Catholic mysticism, 319.
Celibacy as ascetic practice, 256.
Character, and immortality, 135.
stimulated by offerings, 223-225.
Charles, E., 310.
Child, ethical idealism and the, 160.
repentance and the, 157.
sin and the, 157.
intellectual problems of, dealing with, 159-160.
nature of, and religious instruction, 158-159.
religious development of the, 154-160.
instruction, incorrect methods, 155-157.
correct methods, 158-160.
Chinese, abuse of deities, 60.
rain ceremonies, 61.
Christian interpretation of prayer, 309.
Christian method of mystic experience, 328.
Christian religious conceptions, 91-93.
changes due to science, 92.
Greek and Hebrew influence upon, 91.
psychology upon, 92.
influence of speculation in Middle Ages, 91.
modifications of philosophy, 93.
pantheism in modern, 93.
Christian Science and suggestion, 35.
Christianity, fear in, 54.
Hebrew influence upon, 91.
Cleanthes, hymn of, 290-291.
Coe, G. A., 163, 198, 208, 209.
Cognition, as phase of religion, 51.
expressions of, 52-54.
Coma, as a source of religion, 77.
Communion, and the religious, 67.
Conation, as phase of religion, 51.
expressions of, 56-58.

Conceptions of and disbelief in God, 105-106.
Confinement as ascetic practice, 256.
Congregation, heterogeneity of, as obstacle to preacher, 236.
unification of, by preacher, 237-238, 243-247.
dangers of, 247.
will to believe of, 241-242.
Conscience, 32-33.
and interpretation of Bible, 234.
and prayer, 300.
as source of spiritual truth, 234-236.
function of, 234.
valuation by, 235.
Conscientiousness, and the adolescent, 163.
cause of, 164.
Consciousness, and mystic ecstasy, 321.
existence of, 129, 130.
Contagion, conditions favorable to, 203.
examples of, 202.
group, and sacred symbols, 216.
in relation to conversion, 202.
Contra-suggestion and disbelief in God, 108-109.
Conversion, 187-210.
and alternation of selves, 205.
and gradual growth, aims of, 206.
compared, 206-209.
future status of, 209.
methods of, 206-207.
as an awakening, 188-189.
attempts at permanence of, 205.
conditions favorable to, 197-204.
definition, 187-188.
duration of effects of, 204-206.
education and permanence of, 205-206.
environmental factors of, 198-204.
explanation of, 190-197.
psychological, 190-195.
theological, 195-197.
inner factors of, 197-198.
relation between value and method of, 204.
states, 190.
Convert, mental reorganization of, 192-194.
reasons for conversion of, 196.
Copernicus, 92.
Cosmic support and aesthetic prayer, 293.
Cosmos, man's desire for his place in the, 343.
Coué, Emile, 34.
Courage and belief in God, 112.
Creeds, as unification factor in congregations, 237.
in relation to cult practices, 218-219.
Crimes sanctioned by religion, 65.
Crowd contagion, as factor in suggestibility, 45.
Cult practices, 211-227.
and offerings, 222-225.
as objective characteristics of religion, 50.
creeds in relation to, 218-219.
definition of, 211.
in relation to society, 59.
music in relation to, 217-218.
necessity of esoteric view of, 211-212.
origin of, 212-215.
salvation by observance of, 64-65.
Culture, as qualification for preacher, 231-232.
conceptions of God in relation to, 147.
conceptions of immortality in relation to, 148.

ethical, and religion, 63.
religion in relation to, 147.
Cutten, G. B., 156-157, 170, 200-201, 257, 266-267, 321, 330-331.
Cynicism and degeneration, 180.
Cynics, the, 273.

D

Davenport, F. M., 201-202.
Death and immortality, 124-125, 135.
and the ascetic, 272.
of loved ones, reaction to as source of religion, 77.
Degeneration, religious, causes of, 180-185.
Demon possession, 330-332.
and good spirit, 331.
Deprivation as ascetic practice, 256.
Desire, and faith in prayer, compared, 307.
and spirit possession, 331.
as factor in suggestibility, 37-38.
as precondition of mystic experience, 324.
for better life, in relation to conversion, 198-202.
sincerity of, and efficacy of prayer, 306-307.
Determination and group worship, 315.
Dignity as qualification of preacher, 229-230.
Dionysos as personified, natural force, 75-76.
Disappointment and degeneration, 183.
Disembodiment and mystic ecstasy, 321.
Discussions, religious and the child, 157.
Disillusionment, and degeneration, 183.
"Divine discontent," capitalization of, by preacher, 248.
Dogmas and degeneration, 181-183.
Doubt, and the adolescent, 165-175.
as a critical attitude, 170.
dealt with by preacher, 239-242.
methods of dealing with, 172-175.
direction, 173.
distraction, 174.
facing, 175.
individual treatment, 172.
results of, 169-172.
sources of, 166-169.
value of, 169-172.
will to, as a source of doubt, 169.
Dreams and immortality, 122-123.
as source of religion, 77.
Durkheim, Emile, 35, 79-80, 253, 282-284.

E

Eckhart, Meister, 310, 322.
Ecstasy, in conversion, value of, 207.
mystic, physical changes in, 320-321.
of mysticism, 320-323.
Education, as qualification for preacher, 231-232.
early, in relation to permanence of conversion, 205-206.
moral, and the individual, 150, 151.
true, and the child, 159.
Edwards, Jonathan, 34, 157.
Ego, magnification of, in mystic ecstasy, 322-323.
subjugation of the, and immortality, 137-138.
Elation, as a source of religion, 79.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 337.
Emotion, as subjective characteristic of religion, 51, 54.
disorders of, as source of doubt, 166-168.
Emotions, and group worship, 215.
and music, 217.
as unification factor, in congregation, 245.
expression of, and cult practices, 212-213.
religious, 54-55.
Empiricism and mysticism, 315.
Environment, as factor in mystic experiences, 326-327.
factors of, in conversion, 198-204.
Eternity of things and belief in God, 112.
Eucharist, the, 219-221.
definition of, 219.
interpretations of, 220.
fundamental differences of similar rites, 220-221.
Evolution, and asceticism, 253-254.
and belief in immortality, 128.
Exorcism and asceticism, 271-272.
Expectancy, as factor in suggestibility, 39-40.
group, in relation to conversion, 202.
methods of arousing, 203-204.
Experiences, affective, as a cause of belief in God, 98.
as obstacles to belief in God, 108.
and the convert, 196.
emotional, as a cause of belief in God, 98.
as obstacles to belief in God, 108.

F

Fainting, as a source of religion, 77.
Faith, and efficacy of prayer, 305-306.
compared to conversion, 306.
and group worship, 215.
as subjective characteristic of religion, 51.
cures, 39.
Fasting as ascetic practice, 255-256.
Fear, and demon possession, 331.
as basis of Greek religion, 82-83.
as factor in suggestibility, 38.
as unification factor in congregations, 243-244.
rôle of, in Christianity, 54.
Feelings, emphasis on, and preacher, 248.
scorn of, and asceticism, 273-274.
Field, C., 335-336.
Flagellants, the, 266-267.
Frazer, J. G., 61.
Freedom and asceticism, 265-266.
French, doubt among the, 169-170.
Future life, conceptions of, 125-126.
relation of group ideals to, 126.

G

Gardner, C. S., 40-41, 230, 244-245.
Genetics in study of religion, 11-14.
God, as unknowable, 106-108.
and atheism, 106.
and emotion, 107.
and experience, 106.
and knowledge, 108.
and law, 107.
awareness of, and mysticism, 317.

belief in, 95-121.
and righteousness, 110-111.
and prayer, 298.
as restraining force, 109-110.
as urge to righteousness, 110-111.
as objectivity in moral judgments, 111.
as aid to meditation, 111-112.
as source of sympathy, 112.
as source of strength, 112.
as preservation of values, 112-113.
as means of appreciating beauty, 113.
cruelty of, and asceticism, 267-269.
communication with, by casting lots, 295.
through prophet, 296-297.
through spirit control, 295-296.
conceptions of, 95-96.
and ideas of reality, 104.
impersonal and immanent, 97.
in relation to culture, 147.
nature of reality in relation to, 96.
self-contradictory, 104.
transcendent, 97.
expression of love of, and aesthetic prayer, 293.
fear of, and asceticism, 269.
group, and efficacy of prayer, 303-304.
impersonal, and morality, 115.
and personal, and human ideals, 116.
and preservation of values, 117.
and righteousness, 115.
and sensitivity to beauty, 117.
and sympathy, 116-117.
conceptions relating to an, 114.
definition of, 114.
nature and an, 119-120.
present tendency to belief in an, 119.
proof of efficacy of an, 118.
vs. personal, 113-120.
roads to belief in, 97-103.
roads to disbelief in, 103-109.
understanding of, through asceticism, 281.
Greek religious conceptions, 82-86.
early form of, 82-83.
influence of, on Christianity, 91.
Olympian, 83-84.
pantheism of, 84-86.
Gregariousness and the adolescent, 162.
Grief and asceticism, 260-261.
Group and individual religious development, similarities of, 71-72.
Group desire and conversion, examples of, 199-200.
Group development of religion, 77-80.
Group formation by religion, 58.
Growth, gradual, and conversion, compared, 206-209.
physical, and the adolescent, 161.
Guidance, supernatural, and the conscience, 177.
Guyon, Madame, 324.

H

Hallucinations, as results of desire, 37.
caused by physical condition, 44.
causes of, 32, 34.
Hardman, O., 255, 257-259, 270-271, 274-275.
Hardships in relation to conversion, 200.
Hebrew religious conceptions, 86-91.

economic influences upon, 88-90.
ethical deity of, 88.
influence of, upon Christianity, 91.
national deity in, 86-88.
political influences upon, 90-91.
polydaemonism of, 86.
prophets and God idea, 88-89.
Herrin, Ill., revival of 1925, 201-202.
History and origin of religion, 72.
Human behavior, effect of disbelief in immortality upon, 136-141.
Human nature and asceticism, 253, 276-278.
Human needs, religion as satisfaction of, 342.
Human ties, severence of, as ascetic practice, 259.
Humanity, love of, and asceticism, 275, 281.
religion of, 347.
Humiliation, as ascetic practice, 256-257.
as source of religion, 79.

I

Idealism and the adolescent, 163.
Ideals, devotion to, and asceticism, 275-276, 278.
inspired by preacher, 242-248.
modern, and the child, 151.
supplanting high for low, 242.
Illumination by prayer, 299.
Imagery of mysticism, 317.
Immortality, and compensation for life, 135.
and future of religion, 140.
belief in, 122-143.
and religion, 64.
importance in religious life of, 134-141.
obstacles to, 131-133.
origin of, 122-126.
reasons for persistence of, 126-131.
conceptions of, in relation to culture, 148.
disbelief in, effect upon human behavior, 136-137.
forms of, 137-138.
modern interest in, 135, 141.
personal, selfishness of, 139.
pragmatic criterion of truth concerning, 133-134.
solving problem of, 133-134.
Impact, as factor in suggestibility, 43-44.
Impulses, evil, and immortality, 135.
Incantation and prayer, 286.
Individual and group religious development, similarities of, 71-72.
Individual, development of religion in the, 147.
Individual, moralization of the, 149-154.
Individual, welfare of the, and the preacher, 247.
Indulgence and asceticism, 261-262.
Infants, baptism of, 221-222.
Influence, as substitute for immortality, 139.
Insight, as answer to prayer, 297.
as qualification of preacher, 230.
Inspiration, as a source of religion, 78.
genesis of, 195.
Instincts, 24-26.
conflicts of, 27-29.
dealing with the, 28.
purposive character of, 25.
social, and the individual, 152.
teleological view of, 25-26.
Intelligence, growth of, as source of doubt, 166.
Intentions, good, offerings as an outlet for, 224.

Interest, a dominant, as unification factor in congregation, 181-183.
Interests, conflict of, and conversion, 190-191.
elimination of source of, 192.
Introspection in study of religion, 10.
Irrationalism, and religion, 158.

J

James, William, 74, 191.
Jesus' interpretation of prayer compared to monistic, 313.
Justice and belief in immortality, 127-128.

K

Kant, Immanuel, 16, 133.
Kentucky frontier revival of 1800, 200.
Knowledge, as factor in suggestibility, 40-41.

L

Lawlessness in relation to conversion, 201.
Life, compensation for, and immortality, 135.
in disembodied state, and immortality, 132.
seriousness of, and disbelief in immortality, 136-137.
Love, and belief in immortality, 128.
mother, and righteousness, 111.
parental, as substitute for immortality, 138.

M

Magic, and petitional prayer, 289.
and religion, mechanical and moral relationship with forces, 62.
persuasive and coercive attitudes toward natural forces, 61-62.
social and anti-social attitudes of, 60-61.
Man, divine in, and prayer, 310-311.
moral nature of, 33.
reactions to nature, causes of, by, 74-75.
understanding of divine in, and asceticism, 281.
Mana, extra-human element, 78.
and sadism, 263.
ceremonials, 220.
inspiration and conception of, 196.
source of, 79-80.
Masochism and asceticism, 265.
Materialistic metaphysic and religion, 346-347.
McDougall, William, 75, 152.
Mechanism, projective, 32.
and mystic experiences, 331-332.
Meditation, and belief in God, 111-112.
and group worship, 225-227.
dangers of, 226.
Metaphysics, and belief in immortality, 129-131.
and prayer, 290.
religion a product of, 76-77.
Miracle, conversion interpreted as, 208.
Mob behavior, 35.
Mohammed, 322.
Monism and prayer, 311-313.
compared to Jesus' teaching, 313.
Moral development and asceticism, 253, 280.
Moral judgments and belief in God, 111.
Moral order, beliefs in, 51.
psychological explanation of belief in, 52-53.

belief in God in relation to, 52.
Moral sense, development of, by offerings, 223-224.
Morality, and religion, 64-66.
and religious consciousness, 155.
Moralization of the individual, 149-154.
Mortification of flesh as ascetic practice, 256.
Moses, Josiah, 168, 169, 170, 174, 261-262, 267-268, 279, 323.
Music and cult practices, 217-218.
Mystery, and religion, 2-5.
of conversion, 208-209.
Mystic experiences, favorable conditions for, 323-327.
key to understanding of, 329.
methods of producing, 327-329.
necessity of preparation for, 338.
non-religious, 327.
trustworthiness of, 336-339.
Mysticism, 315-340.
and empiricism, 315.
and nature worship, 318.
and pantheism, 317-318.
and rationalism, 315.
confirmation of previous beliefs by, 319-320, 339.
content of, 316-318.
contribution of, 336.
dangers and defects of, 332-333.
definition of, 315-316.
description and classification of, 316-323.
ecstasy of, 320-323.
effect of, 318-319.
imagery in, 317.
intensity of, 320-323.
intrinsic value of, 334.
values of, 332-336.

N

Nature, forces of, religion as a reaction to, 74-76.
worship of, and mysticism, 318.
Neo-Platonic school of religion, 84-86.
Neurosis, as precondition of mystic experience, 326.
New England Revival, 1740-1750, 199.
Nothing but fallacy, 13-14.

O

Offerings, 222-225.
Olympian religion, origin of, 83-84.
Omens as answer to prayer, 295.
Optimism in religion, 55.
Oratory as qualification of preacher, 229.
Organization, as factor in suggestibility, 41-42.
institutional, as objective characteristic of religion, 50.
Orphic religion, the non-moral, 64.
Orient, mysticism of, 319.
Otto, M. C., 183, 346-347.

P

Pain, self-infliction of, as ascetic practice, 257-258.
and ascetic contact with God, 271.
and belief in God, 102.
and mysticism, 317-318.
in Greek religion, 84-85.
in modern religion, 93.
Paracelsus, 39.
Paranoiacs and mystic experiences, 331.
Pathology and asceticism, 251.
in study of religion, 6-8.
Patriotism and the youth, 178.

as substitute for immortality, 138.
Patton, Carl S., 182.
Personality, and behaviorism, 16.
as organization of sentiments and complexes, 24-47, 190.
development of, and religion, 148.
by mysticism, 333-334.
by offerings, 223.
metaphysical background in study of, 14-20.
multiple, 31-32.
secondary, and demon possession, 330-331.
Pessimism, and disbelief in immortality, 136.
in religion, 55.
Philosophy, and an impersonal God, 119.
and soul-atom theory, 131-132.
in relation to religion, 92.
Physiological conditions, as factors in suggestibility, 44.
Piety in religion, 56.
Plato, 150.
Plotinus, 289.
Polydaemonism and Hebrew religious conceptions, 86.
Pomposity as disqualification of preacher, 230.
Pragmatism and belief in God, 103.
Pratt, J. B., 98, 99, 103, 219.
Prayer, 285-314.
aesthetic, 287, 288, 289, 292-293.
and asceticism, 285.
and incantation, 286.
and metaphysics, 290.
and monism, 311-313.
and the divine in man, 310-311.
answers to, 295-297.
as a cult practice, 50.
as mode of sublimation, 286.
Christian interpretation of, 309.
classification of, 287-288.
discrimination in objects of, 293-295.
efficacy of, 298-309.
factors determining the, 303-309.
explanation of, 285-286.
functional definition of, 285.
in terms, of aim or purpose, 286, 287.
of object prayed to, 287-288.
of children, 293.
origin of, 291.
petitional, 287, 289, 292.
compared to magic, 289.
phraseology of, 304-305.
polytheistic, 294.
power of, 297-298.
promptings to, 291-293.
repetitions of, 286-287.
to a-personal God, 288-291.
Preacher, and capitalization of "divine discontent," 248.
and choice of subject and words, 248.
and devotion to truth, 240.
and emphasis on feelings, 248.
and his task, 232-248.
and individual welfare, 247.
and organization of beliefs, 239-242.
and treatment of doubt, 239-242.
and will to believe of congregation, 241-242.
obstacles of, 236.
prevention of controversy by, 238-239.
qualifications, desirable, 229-230.
essential, 230-232.
unification of congregation by, 237-238, 243-247.
vehicle of expression, 237.
Preaching, 228-249.

definition of, 228.
importance of, 228.
Preconversion states, 189.
Prestige, as factor in suggestibility, 43.
Progress of man and religion, 344.
Protestant mysticism, 319.
Psychic phenomena and immortality, 128-129.
Psychoanalysis and asceticism, 252.
Psychology, and origin of religion, 72-73.
and theology, 20-21.
in relation to religion, 92.
introduction to study of, 1-68.
methods of study of, 5-14.
comparative, 8-11.
genetic, 11-14.
pathological, 6-8.
objections to study of, 1-2.
value of study of, 1.
pitfalls of modern, 15-16.
principles of, 24-47.
task of, 18-20.
Puritan mysticism, 319.
Purpose, as subjective characteristic of religion, 51.

R

Rabia, the Sufi mystic, 335.
Rationalism and mysticism, 315.
Realities, spiritual, knowledge of, 232-236.
teaching of, by preacher, 232-239.
obstacles to, 236.
Reality, interpretations of, truth of religion in relation to 345-348.
mechanical aspect of, 18.
nature of, 17-18.
in relation to conception of God, 96.
mechanical view of, 100.
compared to teleological view, 101-102.
mystical contact with, 338-339.
teleological view of, 100.
necessity of harmony between religion and, 344-345.
origin of, 99.
Reflections, ethical, and immortality, 127-128.
as a road to belief in God, 99.
Reform and prayer, 301-303.
Reformer, development of the, 153-154.
Religion, aims of, 148-149.
and belief in gods or spirits, 63-64.
and belief in immortality, 64.
and culture, 147.
and ethical culture, 63.
and harmony with reality, 344-345.
and irrationalism, 158.
and magic, 59-63.
and materialistic metaphysic, 346-347.
and morality, 64-66, 155.
and mystery, 2-5.
and prayer, 309.
and progress of man, 344.
and science, 4.
and social service, 66.
and the youth, 178-179.
as a product of metaphysical interests, 76-77.
as a reaction to natural forces, 74-76.
as a social force, 59.
as an outgrowth of uncertainty, 73-74.
asceticism in, 253.
characteristics of objective, 50.
subjective, 51-58.
universal, 49-50.
consciousness of, 149.

course of development of, 82-94.
contribution of prophets to, 88-89.
economic changes, 89-90.
political changes, 90-91.
definition of, 49-68.
purpose of, 49.
summary of, 59.
destructive and constructive study of, 5-6.
development of, 71-94.
by gradual growth, 147-186.
group source of, 77-80.
in society, 71-143.
in the adolescent, 160-161.
in the adult, 179-185.
in the child, 154-160.
in the individual, 147-340.
erroneous conceptions of, 2.
future of, 348.
and immortality, 140.
group formation by, 58.
meaning or purpose of, 341-343.
optimism in, 55.
origins of,
and history, 72.
and psychology, 72-73.
pessimism in, 55.
primitive, difficulties of understanding, 12-13.
psychological phenomena as a source of, 77-80.
satisfaction of fundamental needs by, 342.
sociological function of, 59.
point of view of, 58-59.
specialization in, 184-185.
study of psychology of, methods, 5-14.
value of, 1.
truth of, 343-348.
fundamental, 347-348.
validity of, 81-82.
Religious and artistic development compared, 179.
Religious and non-religious compared, 66-67.
Religious progress and individual, 304.
Religious stimulation and cult practices, 214-215.
Religious value of asceticism, 283-284.
Religious vitality, mysticism as source of, 335.
Renunciation in religion, 56.
Repentance and the child, 157.
Repression, as pre-condition of mystic experience, 324-325.
reasons for practicing, 325-326.
Responsive reading as unification factor, 237.
Restraint and belief in God, 109-110.
Revelation, explanation of, 336-338.
Reverence, and religion, 55, 148-149.
for man, as qualification of preacher, 231.
Revival of 1857, 200-201.
Righteousness, and belief in God, 110-111.
and the child, 157.
Rolle, Richard, of Hampole, 282.
Russell, Bertrand, 344.

S

Sacred objects, universality of, 53.
Sacrifice, as a cult practice, 50.
Sadism and asceticism, 263-264.
St. Augustine, 193.
St. Catherine of Siena, 275, 329-330.
St. Francis of Assisi, 193, 329-330.
St. Jerome, 259.
St. Poemen, story of, 267.
St. Teresa, 322, 324.
Salvation by observance of cult practices, 64-65.

Santayana, George, 137.
Science, and religion, 4.
and soul-atom theory, 131-132.
as substitute for immortality, 138.
conception of nature by, 119.
in explanation of mysticism, 332.
in relation to religion, 92-93.
Self-consciousness, as factor in suggestibility, 42-43.
Self-expression and asceticism, 252.
Self-government of passions as ascetic practice, 257.
Sensibility and mystic ecstasy, 321.
Sentiment, as subjective characteristic of religion, 51, 54.
Sentiments, development of, 26-27.
formation of, 26.
resulting from gregariousness, 27.
Sermon, analysis of an effective, 249.
Sex, in relation to conversion, 197.
instinct and the adolescent, 161.
Sickness and prayer, 298.
Silesius, Angelus, 323.
Sin, and prayer, 301.
and the child, 157.
Singing, as unification factor in congregations, 237.
group, power of, 217-218.
Scepticism and the adolescent, 162.
Skoptsy rites, 64.
Social corruption and asceticism, 272-273.
Social need of asceticism, 253.
Social service and religion, 66.
Social value, of asceticism, 251-252, 281-283.
of prayer, 300-301.
Society, and modern religion, 93.
and the youth, 164-165.
cult practices in relation to, 59.
decay of, and asceticism, 262.
development of religion in, 71-143.
mysticism as an example to, 335.
taboos in relation to, 58.
Sociology and religion, 58-59.
Socrates, 195.
Songs, and children, 156.
Soul, the, and asceticism, 272.
conception of, 129.
Soul-atom theory and immortality, 131-132.
Specialization and degeneration, 184-185.
Spiritual adjustment and offerings, 224-225.
Spiritual contact in asceticism, 270-271.
Spiritual growth and prayer, 299.
Stigmatization, in relation to mysticism, 329-330.
Stoic idealization as substitute for immortality, 138.
Stoics, 273-274.
and prayer, 290.
Strength and belief in God, 112.
Subconscious, mental processes of, 29-30.
Submission in religion, 56.
Success as favor of God, 296.
"Suffering with Christ" and asceticism, 274-275.
Suggestibility, and animals, 36.
and group ideals, 36.
and symbols, 35.
and therapeutics, 35.
and yogi of India, 33-34.
defined, 33-36.
objective factors of, 43-45.
subjective factors of, 37-43.
value of, 45-46.
Suggestion, and Christian Science, 35.
and ideals, 243.

and the convert, 196.
as a cause of belief in God, 98.
social, and immortality, 127.
Sunday school, part in child's life, 160.
Suso, Henry, 325.
Swisher, W. S., 187, 264.
Symbolism, as unification factor, 237.
as vehicle of expression by preacher, 237.
psychological value of, 216-217.
Symbols, addition of new meaning to, 238.
sacred, effect of association with, 216.
reverence for, 216-217.
Sympathy and belief in God, 112.

T

Taboos, 13.
in relation to society, 58.
Taury, 320.
Temperament in relation to conversion, 198.
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, 327-328.
Theism and ascetic contact with God, 271.
Theology, and psychology, 20-21.
distorted, 157.
Thugism, religious acts of, 64.
Time and efficacy of prayer, 308-309.
Titanic disaster, 78.
Tradition, and religious behavior, 73.
as unification factor, 245-246.
Training, early, and conversion, 198.
Truth, and the preacher, 240.
definitions of, 343-344.
of religion, 343-348.
fundamental, 347-348.

U

Uncertainty, religion an outgrowth of, 73-74.
Unconscious, the, 29-31.
complexes and "fixed ideas" of, 30-31.
Understanding, general, as subjective characteristic of religion, 51.

V

Virtue and religion, 148.
Visions and immortality, 123.
Visitation, sense of, from an absent one,
as source of religion, 77.

W

Well-being in religion, 55-56.
Wilde, Oscar, 169.
Will, and asceticism, 277.
socialized by religion, 57.
strengthened by religion, 56-57.
unified by religion, 57-58.
Wonder, and degeneration, 180.
in religion, 56.
Worship, forms of, 50.
group, 215.
an escape from solitude, 225-226.
and private meditation, 225-227.
benefits of, 226.
Wright, W. K., 155, 196, 298, 301-303.

Y

Youth, and adult, 164-165.
and altruism, 178.
and conscience, 176-177.
direction of, 178-179.
and patriotism, 178.
Yogi of India and suggestibility, 33-34.
Yogin of India and pathological asceticism, 279.

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